



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: Hannah Williams - Democratic Services (07385401954)

YOU ARE SUMMONED to a virtual meeting of **CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE** to be held on **MONDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 2022** at **10.00 AM**.

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 Thursday, 29 September 2022 on the contact details listed above, including stipulating whether the address will be in Welsh or English.

AGENDA

**Page
No's**

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. MINUTES

To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee held on 2nd March 2022.

		5 - 14
3.	CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS	
	To receive the report of the Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication, which informs Members of the new function of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee, following changes to the Leader's Scheme of Delegation at the Council's twenty-seventh Annual General Meeting held on 25 th May 2022.	
		15 - 20
4.	FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME	
	To receive the report of the Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication, which seeks approval of the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee during the 2022-23 Municipal Year.	
		21 - 28
5.	CLIMATE CHANGE CARBON FOOTPRINT DASHBOARD	
	To receive a demonstration of the system.	
6.	PROPOSED SOLAR FARM	
	To receive the report of the Director of Corporate Estates, which updates the Sub-Committee on the work underway in the development of a Solar Farm, to be located at Coed Ely, on an 84-acre 'terraced' former colliery site, near Tonyrefail, which is an asset owned by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.	
		29 - 36
7.	CORPORATE ESTATES ENERGY UPDATE	
	To receive the report of the Director of Corporate Estates, which provides the Sub-Committee with an update in respect of the following:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EV Charging roll out• Carbon footprint return to Welsh Government; and• Carbon Reduction Programme	
		37 - 72
8.	'ACTION FOR NATURE': THE LOCAL NATURE PLAN FOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF	
	To receive the report of the Director of Prosperity and Development which advises the Sub-Committee of the completion of 'Action for Nature' by the RCT Local Nature Partnership.	
		73 - 78
9.	PEATLANDS IN RCT	
	To receive the report of the Director of Prosperity and Development, which updates the Sub-Committee on works related to peatbogs within RCT.	
		79 - 88

10. URGENT BUSINESS

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

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

The Chair and Vice-Chair:

(County Borough Councillor C Leyshon and County Borough Councillor A Crimmings respectively)

County Borough Councillors:

Councillor R Lewis, Councillor M Norris and Councillor J Barton

Officers:

Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive

Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Paul Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services

Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development

Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources

Barrie Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services

David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates

Lesley Lawson, Performance Manager

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group held on Wednesday, 2 March 2022 at 11.00 am.

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

Councillor A Crimmings Councillor J Barton
Councillor S Belzak Councillor M Norris
Councillor E Webster

Officers in attendance: -

Mr Anthony Roberts, Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction
Mr Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Ms Elizabeth Dean, Environmental Planner
Mr Christopher Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Ms Lesley Lawson, Performance Manager
Mr Marc Crumbie, Head of Procurement

Invited External Representatives of the Steering Group: -

Mr I Thomas - Welcome to our Woods

18 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillor R Lewis.

19 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

20 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th November 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

21 UPDATE FROM NET ZERO RCT STAFF EVENT - 17 JANUARY 2022

The Performance Manager provided Members of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group with a verbal update on the Net Zero Rhondda Cynon Taf staff event held on the 17th January 2022. The Performance Manager acknowledged

the work undertaken in previous years in terms of engagement with residents and the community; it was recognised that there was a need to identify, discuss and attain staff views in regard to ways in which to tackle climate change and reduce the Councils Carbon Footprint. The Performance Manager informed Members of the inclusion of questions in staff and management surveys and through ongoing 'Lets – Talk Climate' conversations.

Members were informed that due to the significant focus on Covid-19 over the last two years, focus can now be directed towards engaging with staff and providing opportunities for involvement and contribution directly on climate changes and reducing Carbon emissions. The Performance Manager acknowledged the significance of staff, to the work undertaken now and, in the future, as around 80% of staff are residents of RCT.

Members were informed that the Staff Net Zero event was set up with the aim of providing a new and different opportunity to raise awareness of the Councils plans and to begin a more direct conversation with staff. The event was held virtually and open to all staff from different grades and services; Short surveys were provided to staff who wanted to contribute but were unable to attend.

The Performance Manager advised Members that when the session was set up, the team were unaware of the demand/numbers or level of engagement which would be received; however, a positive response was received with over 70+ staff in attendance to the virtual event. During the event, presentations were received from County Borough Councillor Rhys Lewis, Chris Bradshaw and David Powell. Following the presentations, the participants were directed into discussion groups where they were asked about their ideas towards ways in which the Council can reduce carbon and other emissions in its services and operations and secondly their ideas about the best way to involve and engage all staff to help the Council achieve its carbon reduction targets.

The Performance Manager confirmed the groups engagement and enthusiasm during the discussions; Useful information was attained which will be considered and utilised along with feedback from other engagement streams.

The contributions from the participants confirmed the value of more opportunities for staff to contribute and be involved in Climate Change discussions. Based on the discussions, the following was identified:

- Staff want more information about what the Council is doing about Climate Change and also what staff can do.
- There was a growing focus on reducing carbon emissions across and within services.
- There was growing recognition that 'green' will be our business as usual, and;
- There was growing acknowledgement that everyone has a part to play.

The Performance Manager informed Members that the new Climate Change strategy will direct much of the work which will be available for consideration and launch by the new administration. However, in the meantime preparedness has begun to introduce Climate Awareness Raising sessions for staff to accompany the launch of the new strategy. It was confirmed to Members that arrangements for the next Net Zero staff event have been scheduled for the 9th May 2022. A staff 'Green Space' in Teams has been set up where staff can join, share ideas, and access information concerning what the Council is doing to tackle climate change and provide the Council with direct access to a staff panel for

engagement on climate related issues.

Lastly the Performance Manager confirmed a new wide-ranging involvement or engagement plan that will continue the Climate conversations with residents, staff, and other stakeholders.

The Performance Manager acknowledged that there is still more work to be done by ensuring that staff, particularly those who don't have access to emails have the chance to have their say. The Performance Manager informed Members that from work undertaken to date, it was identified that staff are keen to get involved and play their role with tackling climate change.

The Chair thanked the Performance Manager for the update provided and was pleased with the overall engagement from staff. The Chair was impressed with the 'Green Space' forum on Teams and recognised the value of the forum which encourages staff to share their ideas and views.

One Member echoed the Chair's praises and acknowledged the importance of staff involvement due to the value they possess within the Council by aiding in supporting and progressing projects forward.

One Member raised a query on funding allocation for the forum in order to implement the proposed ideas further. The Chief Executive advised that funding can be allocated depending on the quality of the idea proposed.

Following discussion, the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group **RESOLVED**:

- To note the verbal update of the Net Zero Staff Event.

22 UPDATE REPORT ON OUR PROCUREMENT RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Head of Procurement presented a report to Members of the Committee which provided an update on the work currently undertaken by the Procurement Service in support of the Council's ambitions to be Net Zero by 2030.

Members were informed of a drafted Procurement Strategy 2021/24 which pulled together the requirements of the Draft Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill, identified three strategic themes that align with the Council's Corporate Plan 2020/24. The Head of Procurement confirmed that a key theme throughout the work of the Procurement Service is to support the Council's net zero ambitions.

Members were directed to section 5 of the report which highlighted changes made in respect of processes and standard document in order to further progress the Council's ambitions towards Climate Change.

The Chair thanked the Head of Procurement for the report and acknowledged the wide range of work undertaken by Officers and passed on her thanks for their hard work. The Chair was pleased to see the introduction of graduates towards innovative projects to tackle Climate Change.

A Member echoed the Chair's praises and was pleased to see the involvement of staff towards innovative projects and sharing ideas.

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

- To acknowledge the changes put in place by the Procurement Service and the general direction of travel, in support of the Councils net zero ambitions.

23 UPDATE REPORT ON THE PROPOSED SOLAR FARM PROJECT

The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction presented the report which provided Members with further updates on the developments of the 'Land Based Solar Farm' project which will be located on Council owned land. The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction acknowledged the great potential of the project in context of future carbon offsetting opportunities.

The report provided background information and key updates on the proposals which will provide significant contribution to offset carbon footprint and greatly contribute to achieving the Councils net zero carbon targets.

The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction advised Members that the project can be described as a 6MW Solar Farm and has been given this title due to the combined output of the two 'export aspects' contained within the proposal. The 'export aspect' consists of Western Power Distribution and private wire arrangements. The Head of Energy and Carbon advised Members that negotiations for the private wire are currently at the delegative stage and subject to a non-disclosure arrangement that the Council has entered with a potential partner.

The Head of Energy and Carbon continued by advising Members that currently the Solar Farm proposals have three alternative options which can be utilised as summarised below:

Option 1: to build the solar farm to take advantage of our secured 5MW grid connection, as a stand-alone entity, that will feed directly into the grid at 33kV and trade the power generated via that sole route.

Option 2: to combine the setup described above with a private wire arrangement to a local partner, and export to trade at two levels, these being 33kV and 11kV.

Option 3: to combine both of the above scenarios with the exploration of other opportunities to provide green energy, at a low cost, to future commercial enterprises on a local industrial estate. This approach is hoped to incentivise traditional high energy consumers to relocate to the site, not only for the green energy but also the growth potential of the site. As part of the process, considerations of creating a sizeable Electric Vehicle Charging Station, powered partly by the solar farm but with battery storage facilities, initially for use by the Council and wider public sector fleet, but also in the longer term for commercial HGVs and private vehicles.

The Head of Energy and Carbon informed Members that focus will be targeted towards option 2; however, option 3 may be considered depending on investigations at a later stage and if there is a corporate willingness to pursue it.

The Head of Energy and Procurement advised Members that being able to move the outlined proposals to project status will enable the necessary approved systems of governance to be put in place for continued development of the

project and will permit the Councils appointed team to control matters as progressions are made.

One Member raised concern surrounding the volume of the Solar Farm project and its impact to the natural habitats, vegetation, and carbon footprint on the site. The Member was concerned as there would be a lot of energy and resources which will be utilised to develop the project with minimum return. One Member echoed similar concerns in regard to the ecological impact of the project.

The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction advised Members that investigations will be undertaken to ensure the ecological condition of the site will be maintained to its current conditional status. In regard to the vegetational impact, the Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction reassured Members that efforts will be made to maintain and reduce disturbances on the ground to a minimum.

The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction advised Members of investigations which will be undertaken for carbon footprint during the procurement process and relevant queries will be raised surrounding what the carbon footprint of the project will be. A Member understood the concerns raised however was in support of the project due to its overall future financial benefits towards the Council.

The Chief Executives advised Members of the Steering Group that the Solar Farm will provide continual long-term positive impacts to the environment, as the energy provided from the Solar Farm would be used for over 20 years. A Member echoed the Chief Executive, referring the longevity of the project and generation of energy; however, the Member requested for further reports which would inform Members of the energy utilised during the production on the Solar Farm project.

The Welcome to Our Wood representative supported the development of the Solar Farm project detailing the benefits of producing Council owned energy which in result provides Energy security.

Following discussion, the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group **RESOLVED**:

- To note the contents of the update report
- Agree that the report can be presented to Cabinet, to recommend the approval of the proposal, as a project.
- To receive further reports in 2022 providing further updates on progress.

24 UPDATE REPORT ON REDUCTION OF SINGLE USE ITEMS

The Head of Procurement presented the report to Members of the Steering Group which provided an update on the use of single use items across the Council.

Members were directed to section 3 of the report which highlighted the effective progress made within the corporate environment in respect of removing single use items with all the items listed in section 3.2; now been removed from the Council catalogues.

The Head of Procurement advised Members that further work has been undertaken in respect of other non-plastic single use items as highlighted in section 3.3 of the report.

Despite the successes of reducing single use items within the Council, the Head of Procurement informed Members of the challenges faced of implementing this within the school sector, the reasons for this being set out within the report. However, the Head of Procurement advised Members that actions will be implemented to review the use of single use items across schools in Rhondda Cynon Taff as highlighted in section 3.5 of the report. The Head of Procurement advised Members that in addition to reviewing the catering sector, the cleaning and janitorial sector will be reviewed.

To conclude the Head of Procurement directed Members to section 4 of the report, highlighting the importance of adopting a responsible and sustainable approach to managing products which no longer have a use. Two examples were included within the report - IT Equipment and Office Furniture, Fixtures and Fittings.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the report and was pleased with the actions taken towards reducing single use items, especially within the school sector.

One Member echoed the Chair's praises towards to work undertaken to reduce single use items and the re-furnishment and re-using of IT equipment and office furniture. The Member stated the importance of a re-usable and circular economy.

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

- To note the progress made in respect of removing the ability to order single use items from the Councils online ordering systems.
- Acknowledge the impact of Covid-19 towards the group in relation to tackling single use plastic/items within the school sector.
- To note the progressing work with broader supply categories where single use plastics/items are being purchased, with a focus on the Council's cleaning and janitorial contracts.

25 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE ESTATES

THE TREE PLANTING PROJECT

The Director of Corporate Estates provided a verbal update in regards to the Tree Planting Project. To begin, he advised Members of the Councils annual rolling programme for replacing damaged or dead trees across Parks and Countryside's areas in RCT. The Director of Corporate Estates confirmed that thus far, the team have been able to plant three times the number of trees than in previous years. He confirmed that currently the team are in the process of planting 1,200 trees across the three areas in RCT.

The Director of Corporate Estates was pleased with the excellent progress made towards tree planting across the area; To progress the project further, the Director of Corporate Estates confirmed collaborations with Welcome to Our Woods in order to discuss and share ideas and double the efforts of ensuring the right tree is planted in the right place.

The Welcome to Our Woods Representative advised Members of the significance of the project to Climate Change and the opportunity to demonstrate partnership working with Rhondda Cynon Taf Council . He provided Members with a brief overview of the three items discussed in relation to the Tree Planting Project; these included:

1. Planting Trees in Private Gardens
2. Working with local businesses to plant trees in staff resting areas, and
3. Planting trees on unused waste land.

The Welcome to Our Woods representative echoed the importance of planting the right tree at the right place for the right reason. He advised Members of the value of the project which is aimed at leaving a positive legacy behind for local people and businesses within RCT.

The Chair was impressed with the work currently being undertaken by team; she advised the importance of the Local Authority working together with the Community.

One Member advised the importance of the Local Authority to display the appropriate message to the Community and residents detailing the significance of the right tree at the right place. An inquiry was also raised concerning ash dieback and its effect on the trees along with the Councils Corporate Plan for replacing the removed trees.

One Member advised the Steering Group of the importance of including the Tree Planting Project within the Green Space Forum in order to encourage staff input and involvement.

The Chief Executive advised the Steering Group that further updates should be provided to the Committee in relation to the Tree Planting Project in order to highlight the progress being made. He confirmed funding availability towards tackling Climate Change which can be utilised as a long-term favourable investment in order impact the environment positively.

EV Charging Strategy & the Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction provided Members with a brief overview of the EV Charging Strategy. Members were reminded of the earlier work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the consideration of the development of the infrastructure to support for low carbon vehicles in RCT which formulated 10 recommendations for the Cabinet's consideration in 2018. Members were advised that the recommendations were formed with 10 ambitions which were displayed in the strategy. The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction advised Members that the strategy was well received, and the efforts of the staff was commended by Councillors.

The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction advised Member that the strategy was published in January 2022 and is now available on the Councils website under [Think Climate Change](#). Members were advised that the implementation plan is now in development with a small team under the remit and oversight of the working group. The plan is currently being produced with an inherent action plan that will set objectives and milestones to signpost the way forward. The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction advised Members that the anticipation for the second part of the project will formally be agreed upon by the wider working group during mid-March to enable it to be brought forward for scrutiny and comments by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

The Head of Carbon Reduction informed Members of a new company called Connected Kerb which has been appointed to work on the Electric Vehicle Charging Points as the original supplier had been removed from the Contract by Cardiff City Region. The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction informed Members that the new company has met with Frontline Services and plans are in place to continue distribution of the first phase of the project for 30 plus EV Charging point in different locations. Phase two of the project will be in the future with a further roll out of 30 plus EV charging points.

The Chair advised that the increase in EV Charging Points will be welcomed by residents and Councillors. The Chair was pleased with the inclusion of the information on the Website as it keeps residents informed.

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

- To note verbal update

26 UPDATE REPORT ON THE EDINBURGH DECLARATION

The Environmental Planner presented the report to Members; the report aimed at advising Members of the Edinburgh Declaration and the role of Local Authorities within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; This aims at ensuring transformative change for nature over the coming decade.

Members were advised of Conference of the Parties (COP15); Members were advised that the framework was delayed by the Pandemic, however, a meeting should take place in the Spring which agrees on the post-2020 framework of biodiversity. The vision for the framework is to be living in harmony with nature by 2050. The Environmental Planner informed Members of the goals in place to conserve biodiversity; implementation plans are in progress which include the involvement of Local Authorities (LA) as well as the National Government.

The Environmental Planner advised Members that progression of the framework will be undertaken through a participatory approach; Members were advised that the Edinburgh Declaration was a result of that. To conclude the Environmental Planner informed Members that LA have been encouraged by the Welsh Government to sign up and support the implementation of the international agreement.

A Member advised of the importance of the document and significance of it being signed.

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

- To support the signage of the Edinburgh Declaration

SUMMARY REPORT OF OUTCOMES ACHIEVED IN RECENT YEARS

The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction provided an update to Members in relation to the key environmental and energy outcomes achieved in recent years and the work underway on renewable energy projects and other carbon reduction related issues. He advised Members that the report aimed to provide an overview of the good work undertaken thus far and future projects.

The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction advised Members of the RCT Corporate Plan 2020/24 'Making A Difference'; He advised Members of the Council acknowledgement of delivering on Climate Change commitments as one of the greatest challenges.

Members were directed to section 5 of the report which lists out the Councils projects achievements to date in relation to tackling Climate Change. Some examples of these successes included reducing carbon emissions by 40% from Council investments in renewable energy sources; all street lighting in RCT has been converted to LED versions and since 2016 this has resulted in annual 84% reduction in reported carbon from 2018/19; The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction informed Members that RCT Council is the first LA to install Hydrogen Fuel Cells which now have 21 units installed in Leisure Centres, School and Offices throughout RCT.

The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction directed Members to section 6 of the report which highlighted to Members RCT Council's current projects in progress. The projects include 'Taffs Well Thermal Spring', which utilises geo-thermal heating, the Council investment in world leading automated recycling plants at Bryn Pica, which has improved the Councils recycling targets, biodiversity work underway which explores trees and peatbogs as a source of capturing carbon and a number of 'Active Travel' routes which have been established across RCT such as the Taff Trail, Church Village Community Route and Cynon Trail. The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction advised members that focus has been directed on improving active travel networks by developing new routes which will improve connectivity and serve key local facilities such as schools, colleges, places of employment and shops.

Members were directed to section 7 of the report; this section highlighted the Councils plans to decarbonise the County Borough by working collaboratively to develop EV charging and decarbonise the Council's fleet, and staff training and the new green space forum initiative. The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction advised Members that section 7 of the report refers to the Councils new system of Corporate Governance which has been set up under the Steering Group as illustrated in the appendix of the report.

As highlighted in the report the Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction advised Members of the excellent work that has been undertaken which reflects the sustainable development of the principles of the Well-Being and Future Generations Act (2015), as projects are meeting the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations. Despite the successes achieved the Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction acknowledged there is further work to be done.

The Chair was pleased with the report and the excellent work which has been undertaken to date. The Chair encouraged the achievements made to be advertised and promoted to residents and staff.

One Member echoed the praises from the Chair; he was pleased with the achievements made during a short period of time.

A Member commended the work undertaken within the project, however requested for further new installations of LED lighting in some parts of RCT as lighting produced is focal rather than spread out. The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction advised the Member of the evolution of LED technology and reassured the Member that better LED street lighting will be installed.

Following discussions, the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group **RESOLVED:**

- To acknowledge the content of the report as part of the ongoing work of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group.
- To receive further reports in the future providing further updates on achievements and progress.

This meeting closed at 11.55 am

**COUNCILLOR A CRIMMINGS
CHAIR.**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE

3rd OCTOBER 2022

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT CABINET MEMBER, COUNCILLOR C LEYSHON

Author: Hannah Williams, Democratic Services (01443 424062)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the new function of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee, following changes to the Leader's Scheme of Delegation at the Council's twenty-seventh Annual General Meeting held on 25th May 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure Members are aware of the Committee's new function and its updated Terms of Reference.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In March 2019, the Welsh Government published Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales, which set out the Welsh Government's approach to "**cut emissions and increase efficiency in a way that maximises wider benefits for Wales, ensuring a fairer and healthier society. It sets out 100 policies and proposals that directly reduce emissions and support the growth of the low carbon economy**". The report references the findings of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, published in advance of the Committee on Climate Change Net Zero report. A 'Low Carbon Wales' sets the foundation for Wales to transition to a low Carbon nation.
- 4.2 As part of its continued effort and ambition to achieve the target of becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council established its Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group in 2019.

The cross-party Steering Group was formed to generate discussion and challenge, to ensure Rhondda Cynon Taf is putting climate change at the centre of all we do and to ensure we are doing all we can to meet our aim of being a carbon neutral Council and County Borough by 2030.

4.3 An ambitious [work programme](#) was set out to enable the Council to ensure an Authority-wide approach to issues of climate change. Over the past three years, the Steering Group considered the following topics to support the implementation and delivery of the priorities identified within the Council's Corporate Plan:

- Biodiversity Duty;
- Corporate Estates Energy and Carbon Reduction;
- Community Use of Underused/Vacant Land;
- Waste Management;
- Local Procurement of Supplies and Services;
- Elimination of single use plastics in all Council contracts and premises;
- Taffs Well Thermal Spring – Generating carbon free energy for the community of Taffs Well;
- Transportation;
- Air Quality;
- Community Engagement;
- Energy Generation;
- Nature's Assets;
- Strategic and Local Development Plans; and
- Electrical Vehicle Charging

4.4 The Steering Group's discussions and recommendations to Cabinet have been invaluable in assisting the Council in developing its [Tackling Climate Change Strategy 2022-2025](#) and [Electrical Vehicle Charging Strategy 2021-2030](#).

5. NEW ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 At the Council's twenty-seventh Annual General Meeting held on 25th May 2022, the Leader announced his [Scheme of Delegation](#) for the 2022-2023 Municipal Year, whereby a number of changes were made to the Climate Change Steering Group.

5.2 With climate priorities now embedded across the work of the Council, continuous engagement with the third sector and our local communities and Strategies and Action Planning in place, the former Steering Group will now function as a Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee and as such, the membership includes Cabinet Member representation with voting rights to determine a matter.

5.3 The revised Terms of Reference state that the Sub-Committee will:

- Develop specific actions and policies which support the reduction of the Council's Carbon Footprint and respond to '[Net Zero](#)' – The report of the

Committee on Climate Change and the Welsh Government's report [Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales](#);

- Deliver upon the Council's commitment to match the ambitions of the UK 100 Agreement by becoming a Clean Energy organisation.;
- develop these commitments and in doing so, become more ambitious through resetting targets and challenging how the Council operates and approaches challenges in the future to become a 'Net Zero' Council by 2050;
- Provide the opportunity for persons, interested parties, and groups who live in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council the ability to engage in the wider response of the community to climate change;
- Consider the long-term trends that will affect Rhondda Cynon Taf and what steps can be taken locally to contribute to their mitigation; and
- Consider how the Council can work with others both locally and nationally to consider joint solutions.

5.4 A notable change within the Scheme of Delegation, is the appointment of the Council's Climate Change Champion, who has a crosscutting responsibility for challenging and championing Climate Change. In addition to her role as Vice-Chair of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee, Councillor Barton will be invited to attend Cabinet on matters relating to Climate Change and the newly formed RCT Climate Action [Network](#) on behalf of the Council.

5.5 In addition to the above-mentioned changes to the Leader's Scheme of Delegation, the AGM also put in place a Scrutiny function for Climate Change. [The Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee](#)

5.6 By taking these steps and enabling wider challenge, we hope that we can learn from communities, strengthen our partnership arrangements, and joint working opportunities and so maximise the impact of our collective work. Due to the above-mentioned governance, scrutiny and involvement changes, there is no longer a requirement for External Representation within the Sub-Committee.

5.7 With the agreement of the Chair, the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee will meet when necessary to monitor and deliver key climate commitments in line with the Council's Corporate Plan priorities. The meetings will be made available to the public and recordings will be accessible on the Council's website following each meeting.

6. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

6.1 This report is for information purposes only and does not require consultation. The appropriate consultation will be undertaken in respect of each topic considered by the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

11. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

11.1 The Council's approach to the Well-being of Future Generations Act is to embed its requirements into the Council's business including its Climate Commitments. As such, all reports arising from the Sub-Committee's Work Programme will incorporate the national goals, together with the five Ways of Working to deliver the Council's Climate Commitments.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 At the Council's twenty-seventh Annual General Meeting held on 25th May 2022, the Leader announced his Scheme of Delegation for the 2022-2023 Municipal Year, whereby several changes were made to the Terms of Reference of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee.

12.2 It is necessary to inform Members of the above-mentioned changes at its first meeting of the Municipal Year.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE
3rd OCTOBER 2022

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

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE

3rd OCTOBER 2022

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23 MUNICIPAL YEAR.

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT CABINET MEMBER, COUNCILLOR C LEYSHON

Author: Hannah Williams, Democratic Services (01443 424062)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To comment and approve the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee during the 2022-23 Municipal Year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee:

- 2.1 Subject to any amendments, approve the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee Work Programme for the 2022-23 Municipal Year.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that progress of the Council's Tackling Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is monitored to respond to the Cabinet's commitment for the Council to become Carbon Neutral by 2030, and to work with residents and businesses within the Borough to ensure the whole County Borough is Carbon Neutral as close as possible to the 2030 target.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The formerly named Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group was established to ensure an Authority-wide approach to issues of climate change and the Council becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030.
- 4.2 This Cabinet Steering Group provided the opportunity to proactively discuss progress and delivery of actions, which emanate from the Corporate Plan, which aims to meet climate change challenges and reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

4.3 The document is a rolling work programme for the 2022 - 2023 Municipal Year, to allow for regular updates and amendments. The work programme is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4.4 During the period outlined, the work programme may be subject to further change to take into account any additional/deleted reports.

5. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

5.1 The work programme has been compiled by members of the Senior Leadership Team in discussion with the Chair of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report. Any investment required to address any of the recommendations will be reported and considered separately.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

10.1 The Council's approach to the Well-being of Future Generations Act is to embed its requirements into the Council's business including its Climate Commitments. As such, all reports arising from the Sub-Committee's Work Programme will incorporate the national goals, together with the five Ways of Working to deliver the Council's Climate Commitments.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The work of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee seeks to enable the Council to achieve the 2030 target.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE

3RD OCTOBER 2022

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

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Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee Work Programme

Forward plan of proposed Climate Change Sub-Committee business for the 2022/23 Municipal Year

Specific Period: September 2022 – May 2023.

Meetings of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee will be convened by the Chair when necessary.

Contact: Hannah Williams – Council Business Unit

DATE	REPORT TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
October 2022	<p>Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee Arrangements To update the Sub-Committee on the amended Terms of Reference and new arrangements of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee following the Council's AGM.</p>	Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication
	<p>Proposed Solar Farm To update the Sub-Committee on the work underway in the development of a Solar Farm, to be located at Coed Ely, on an 84-acre 'terraced' former colliery site, near Tonyrefail, which is an asset owned by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.</p>	Director of Corporate Estates
	<p>Corporate Estates Energy Update To provide the Sub-Committee with an update in respect of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EV Charging roll out • Carbon footprint return to Welsh Government; and • Carbon Reduction Programme 	Director of Corporate Estates

	<p>‘Action for Nature’: The Local Nature Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf To advise the Sub-Committee of the completion of ‘Action for Nature’ by the RCT Local Nature Partnership.</p>	Director of Prosperity and Development
	<p>Climate Change Carbon Footprint Dashboard Demonstration To provide the Sub-Committee with a demonstration of the Climate Change Carbon Footprint Dashboard.</p>	Chief Executive
	<p>Peatlands in RCT To update the Sub-Committee on works related to peatbogs within RCT.</p>	Director of Prosperity and Development
December 2022	<p>The Council’s S6 Biodiversity Duty (Environment (Wales) Act To update the Sub-Committee on progress in discharging the Council’s Biodiversity Duty and to seek approval to submit the required update report to Welsh Government.</p>	Director of Prosperity and Development
	<p>Hydro Schemes To update the Sub-Committee on the following schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dare Valley Hydro • Treforest Hydro • RCT’s Wider Hydro Aspirations 	Director of Corporate Estates
	<p>RCT Tree Planting Proposals To provide the Sub-Committee with the opportunity to consider Tree Planting proposals for RCT.</p>	Director of Prosperity and Development
	<p>Community Engagement</p>	

	To provide the Sub-Committee with the proposed approaches to resident/community engagement and communication.	Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication
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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE

3 October 2022

UPDATE REPORT ON THE PROPOSED SOLAR FARM

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE ESTATES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE & CORPORATE SERVICES

Author(s): David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates and Anthony Roberts, Head of Energy & Carbon Reduction.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide a further update to Members with regards to the work underway in the development of a 'Land Based Solar Farm', to be located on Council owned land located at Coed Ely, on an 84-acre 'terraced' former colliery site, near Tonyrefail. The facility will, when constructed, be an asset owned by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report as part of the ongoing work in response to our climate change ambitions and agree to the further progress of the project proposals, in line with the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Receive further report(s) to provide updates on progress as/when deemed appropriate.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The contents of this report provide contextual information and a key update on this exclusive issue. It provides key information updates on the proposal where the Council has plans to build and finance a credible solar farm, that will make a vastly significant contribution to the Council's ability to offset its Carbon Footprint, and towards achieving its Net Zero Carbon target.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Previous reports have described the ongoing work to investigate the potential of using RCT owned land for the development of major renewable energy projects for both wind and solar generation, including proposals developed with the assistance of the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES). This particular project will be primarily developed by the Council and as such would both contribute to the increase in the renewable energy provision and carbon reduction/offsetting in the area, whilst also making a positive economic contribution to the financial situation of the Council, for the benefit of citizens.
- 4.2 The name and location of the site had been anonymised in previous reports, for the reasons stated therein, however negotiations in the process of agreeing a Power Purchase Agreement / Offtake Contract with a potential partner are now drawing to a close, and we are now able to provide further details, including the geographical location of the proposed site (please refer to Appendices).

5. UPDATE ON SOLAR FARM INSTALLATION

5.1 Project Principles:

The project is described as a 6MW Solar Farm, a title given because of the combined output of the two 'export aspects' contained within the proposals.

Firstly, the magnitude of the grid connection offer that the Council previously accepted from Western Power Distribution, which is set at a maximum of 5MW and to be exported at 33kV.

Secondly, the capacity to increase the generation potential for the total size of the solar farm, which considers a further export capacity of up to 1MW at the lower voltage of 11Kv, taken to our potential 'public sector' partner, via a private wire arrangement.

The proposals have three alternative routes forward, and these scenarios were summarised in the previous report, which was brought to Cabinet in early March this year.

5.2 Updated Information:

Consent was granted by Cabinet, following the March presentation, to proceed with the proposals and permission was given to move plans forward to project status.

Good progress has been achieved in the period and our lawyers are in the final stages of finalising the heads of terms for the private wire connection arrangement and Power Purchase Agreement (or Offtake Contract) with a potential 'public sector' partner. The Council has signed

a Non-Disclosure Agreement regarding this sensitive matter and so no further details regarding this aspect of the project can be made public, at this stage.

Good progress has also been achieved with Western Power Distribution (WPD) at their Headquarters in Cardiff, and the location of the 33Kv connection point to the grid was revealed in detail, and then discussed between the two parties. WPD confirmed that the National Grid had now also agreed to accept the proposals and it was agreed that further meetings between both parties will take place at appropriate junctures within the project programme.

Following the WPD approval, several meetings were then held with representatives of the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) and it has been agreed that we can use the WGES 'Helioscope' design, (utilised for the project thus far) to seek to procure the services of industry design specialists. The purpose of this would be to produce a more detailed design that will be used to inform the Project Brief and it is planned to commence discussions will start with our planning colleagues during the third quarter of 2022, with a view to submitting a planning application at the appropriate time.

Discussions are ongoing with the local Farmer who has access to the land (with grazing rights) regarding the future management of the land on which the solar farm is to be built. Negotiations are progressing well and it is anticipated that a mutually beneficial agreement will be reached before commencement of the planning stage.

The Council has now appointed a Project Manager, to take the project forward to the 'Planning Stage', to update the project timeline and to periodically review the budget, a process that is planned for the third quarter of 2022/23.

5.3 Project Proposal Details:

At the time of writing this report, the headline estimated figures remain as reported to Cabinet in March 2022 and are identified in section 9. However, it should also be noted that the current economic situation with rising inflation and energy costs means that at the six-month review, due to be undertaken during Qtr 3 (of this f/y), it is likely that the previous figures for capital investment and the payback period will need to be adjusted accordingly. This process will be initiated following the involvement of the appointed Project Manager.

As previously reported, the project has the potential to 'offset' over 1,500 tonnes of carbon per-annum and approaching 54,000 tonnes over the expected 35yr 'minimum' lifecycle of the project. Also, the project is still highly likely to generate an income for the Council, over and above the annual cost of financing/operating the scheme, and then provide a substantial financial benefit once the payback period has passed.

Periodic updates will be afforded to Members during the progress of the project and further approval will be sought at each notable stage of development.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 This supporting report is for the purpose of update and consequently an Equality Impact Assessment is not required in regard to this report.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This supporting report is for the purpose of update and consequently Welsh Language Impact Assessment is not required with regard to this report, however a copy can be made available in Welsh if requested.

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 8.1 There are no consultation requirements at present with regard to this supporting report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 As previously reported, the budget estimate for the full development and construction costs for this entire project stands in the region of £6.82million (including fees), which as stated in item 5.3, will be subject to a six-monthly review in the third quarter of f/y 2022/23.
- 9.2 It is anticipated that it would be affordable to fund this by use of Prudential Borrowing, with the annual income from the energy generation being more than sufficient to cover the annual borrowing repayments and the ongoing annual costs and maintenance of the assets. This is subject to a full project report and business case being presented to Cabinet and, if approval is then given, a further report to Council to obtain the Prudential Borrowing approval.
- 9.3 In view of the above, it should be noted that the cost of borrowing has now risen above the level used in the financial model at the time of the previous assessment (was 3%pa to 4.17% now). Despite this situation, it is felt that due to the wholesale market rises in energy costs (both known current and predicted future rises) the project model will still show a payback period of considerably under 25yrs, when the next budget/income review is assessed.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report, at this stage.

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

11.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an interim update report relating to the work of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee with regards to the work underway on the development of key renewable energy projects and certain other related issues. Any future actions that arise as a result of the recommendations of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee report will be considered by the Council's Cabinet and it will take full regard to the seven national wellbeing goals.

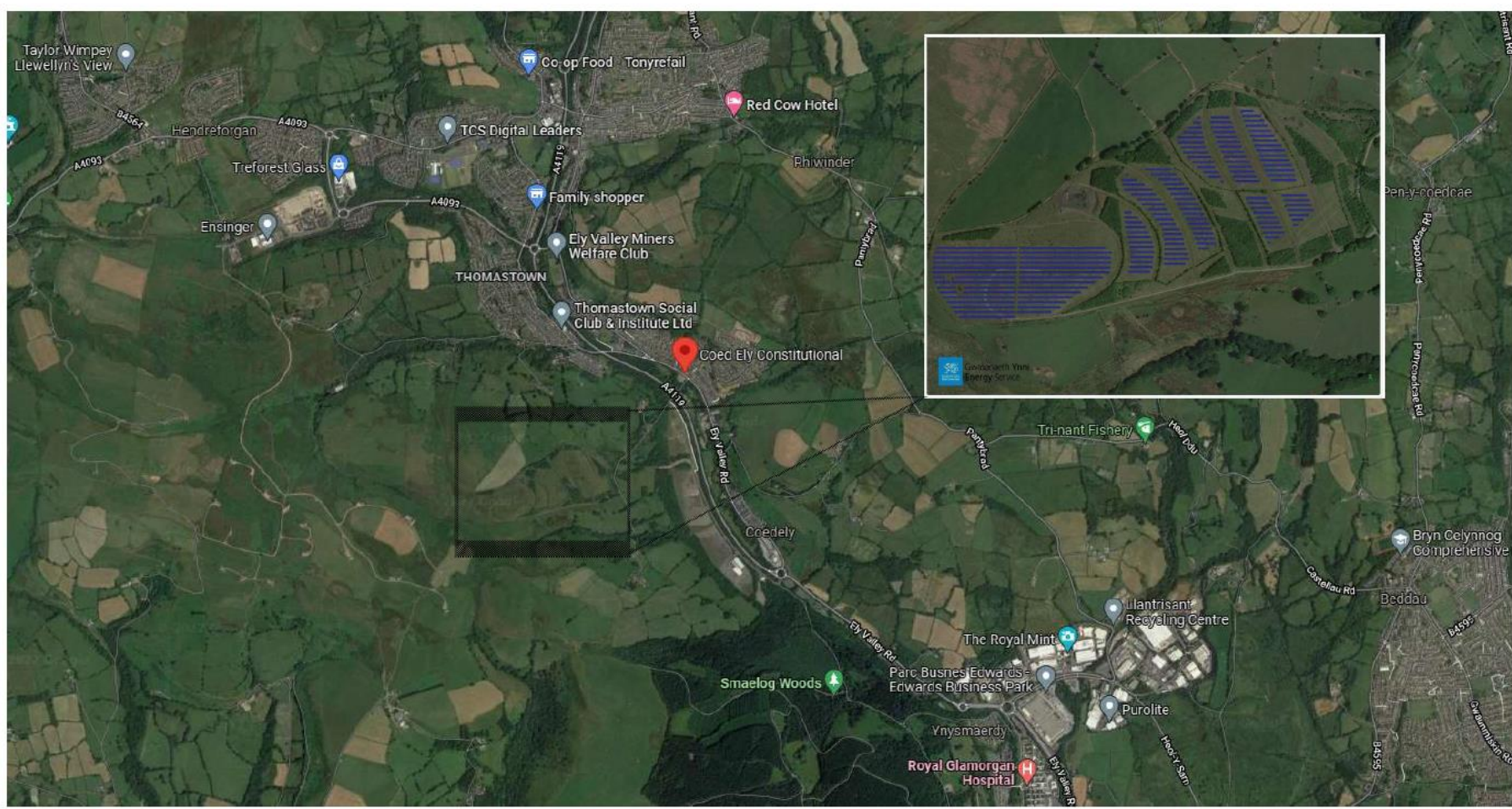
12. CONCLUSION

12.1 This report provides contextual information and a key update on the exclusive issue of the proposals for a Solar Farm, which is one of the areas of work covered by the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee. It provides an update on the proposal where the Council has plans to build and finance a credible solar farm, as previously reported to Cabinet in March 2022.

Contact Officers: David Powell 01443 424144 and
Anthony Roberts 01443 281146

Appendix A

Site Location Plan

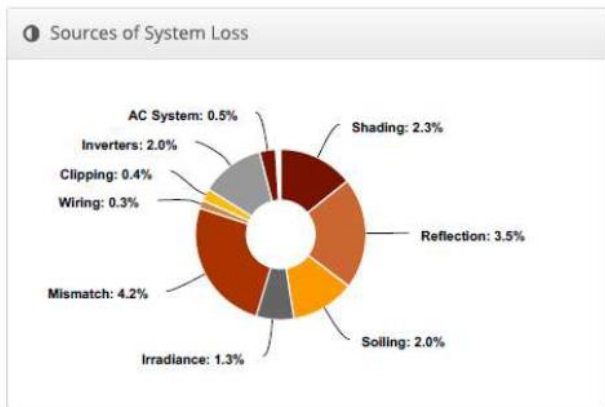


Appendix B

Site Layout Plan

Coed Ely - Site LAYOUT (Feasibility)

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE

03 OCTOBER 2022

UPDATE REPORT ON KEY ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS AND RELATED ISSUES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE ESTATES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE & CORPORATE SERVICES

Author(s): David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates and Anthony Roberts, Head of Energy & Carbon Reduction.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update to the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee with regards to the work underway on the development of renewable energy projects and certain other Carbon Reduction related issues.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this update report as part of the ongoing work of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee.
- 2.2 Receive further reports during 2022 and 2023, providing updates on progress within key areas.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The contents of this report provide background information and key updates on the current situation with regards to the issues covered by the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee. It provides an update on the proposals for the Council to build and finance potential renewable energy projects that will make a significant contribution to the Council achieving its Carbon targets towards 2030 and also provides an update on other key strategies, plus plans to reduce the Council's Carbon impact.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Officers have previously reported on the ongoing work to investigate the potential of using RCT owned land for the development of major renewable energy projects for both wind and solar generation, with the assistance of the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES). These are projects which would be primarily developed by the Council, either exclusively or in partnership with other stakeholders. As such, the projects would both contribute to the increase in the renewable energy provision and carbon reduction in the area, whilst also making a positive economic contribution to the financial situation of the County Borough, which could then be invested in further related improvements or other services for the benefit of citizens.

5. UPDATE ON RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

5.1 Solar Farm Installation.

Plans are well underway for the development of a 'Land Based Solar Farm', to be located on Council owned land. The facility will, when constructed, be an asset owned and operated by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. The project, if realised, has the potential to 'offset' over 1,500 tonnes. of carbon per-annum and approaching 54,000t. over the expected lifecycle of the project, and will take the Council's portfolio of renewable energy potential, from Solar alone, to over 8MWp. The project is covered in more detail as part of a separate and specific report.

5.2 Geo-Thermal Technology

The ground-breaking 'geo-thermal heating' project, involving Taff's Well Thermal Spring, was due to be completed during September, with the delivery of the new school extension being the final piece of the jigsaw. The completion of this project, together with the refurbishment of the nearby park pavilion (following recent flood damage), means that the full extent of the heat network project should now be in operation. The estimated annual carbon saving of this project being around 17tonnes.

When complete it is hoped that the lessons learned during this project will act as 'stepping-stones' to future heat recovery networks, involving 'mine water', at targeted locations within the County Borough, or in partnership with adjacent authorities.

Discussions with the Coal Authority are well advanced in regard to some potential 'Pilot' projects within RCT, with one feasibility study report having already been received for an ambitious initiative at Rhondda Heritage Park. An expression of interest has been submitted to WG to obtain grant funding, to help facilitate further research into the proposals, that also involve heating a nearby school, and we are hopeful that this bid will be successful in due course.

5.3 Amgen Developments

Following a meeting in early August, it was established that the 1.5MW wind turbine project at Nant-y-Gwyddon could proceed, and site works have now commenced.

The Amgen board have also agreed to proceed with a 200kW solar PV development, at the Bryn Pica site, to decarbonise the consumption at the wastewater treatment plant, and will be going for planning consent in the third quarter of 2022/23.

5.4 Wind Power Aspirations

The lack of any spare 33kV grid capacity at WPD's Upper Boat distribution hub has been proving a barrier to progress. However, the Council has been successful in obtaining two grid connections from WPD in pursuit of its aspirations to generate wind energy, one for 4.2MW at 11kV and a second for 6MW at 33kV. Discussions have been underway, for some time, with several wind farm developers, who have plans to construct turbines on land adjoining to that owned by the Council.

Following negotiations, the 4.2MW grid connection offer has been novated over to a developer to enable them to realise the full potential of the adjacent site. The Council will be given the opportunity to invest further in the project before construction starts, and the agreement arrived at with the developer also secured substantial community benefits, moving forward, irrespective of the outcome of any future talks. Discussions are ongoing and we have now agreed to meet with the developer, on a monthly basis, as they develop their proposals.

The 6MW connection offer is currently being discussed with the adjacent developer and WPD, to determine usage details and the potential for collaborative working in relation to the 'route to grid', together with all other options. The outcome of the discussions will have a major bearing on the future size and shape of the potential project.

Discussions are also underway, with a third developer and an Independent Distribution Network Operator (IDNO), to determine the feasibility of decarbonising a cluster of RCT operated sites within the vicinity of one of our major town centres. This would be achieved by the construction of a mini network to distribute electricity to all the identified sites "behind the meter", and from a central distribution point. Although discussions are at an early stage, the potential outcome, if eventually realised, could have a major impact on the carbon used at the sites identified.

We will continue to hold further dialogue with all the above developers to determine if collaborative working arrangements can be agreed upon, and enacted, for the benefit of both parties.

5.5 Hydro Electricity Prospects:

The Corporate Estates team have identified a series of potential opportunities for Hydro Electric generation within the boundaries of the wider County Borough.

We have engaged with the company that prepared a previous feasibility study (circa 2010) for a potential 'low head' hydro-electric scheme at Treforest Weir. The findings of the initial report appear favourable, and work is now underway to find potential 'offtake sites' in the vicinity to enable the full potential of the project to be realised.

The team have also been reviewing the previously considered 'high-head' hydro sites, of potential, across the County Borough, and specialist providers again were asked to provide a detailed study of a previously published proposal for a scheme at Dare Valley Country Park. It is felt that these proposals have the potential to help decarbonise the site and a decision has been made to pursue the available options further.

In view of the opportunities for development in this field, there are plans to bring several separate and specific reports to the Sub-Committee, at a future date, to further inform Members of details in relation to this work.

5.9 Carbon Reduction Programme

The 2022/23 programme is well underway. The works include a wide range of proposals including such schemes as Solar PV, LED Lighting, Air Handling Units with heat recovery and Boiler Upgrades, etc. The programme for 2022/23 is valued at over £1.5M and could generate estimated annual savings of 2,933,269kWh which is the equivalent to circa. 590 tonnes of CO2 annual savings. When added to savings from previous years, dating back to fy'2009/10, the equivalent CO2 annual savings (resulting from this programme) are now in the region of 6,000 tonnes per annum.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE (UPDATE)

6.1 Climate Change Working Group (CCWG)

The Climate Change Working Group was set up to support the work of the 'Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group' in March 2021.

Recently, attendance at the Group has been honed to include mainly key officers from across all Service Areas, including the Chairs and/or Vice-Chairs of the various working groups. Feedback has been positive to date and the workstreams of the various groups are detailed below.

Recently, in view of the current volatility of the wholesale energy market, and the predicted rise in energy prices, Council staff are also now working, across Service Areas, to look at short / medium term measures to help reduce the impact of the energy rises. Details of this current /ongoing work may form the basis of a future report to the Sub Committee.

6.2 Carbon Footprint Working Group

During the Spring of 2021, the Welsh Government published its Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Scheme to support its stated goal of the Welsh Public Sector being Net Zero Carbon by 2030. Under this scheme, all Welsh public sector organisations are required to report annually, their carbon emissions to the Welsh Government, beginning with the 2019/20 and 2020/21 years.

Although similar to the Carbon Footprint reports, the Welsh Public Sector reporting regime has some differences, notably in how it reports and analyses the emissions resulting from Procured Goods/Services and Capital Assets.

For the 2021/22 year and beyond, the reporting requirement has been modified to include carbon emissions from Home Working, Staff Commuting and Business Travel (e.g. staff using their own vehicles for Council duties), which are areas that were not covered during previous financial years.

Compiled with the assistance of colleagues across the Authority, reporting to the Sub-Group, the 2021/22 Emissions Report is in the final stages of validation and analysis (at the time of writing), before being submitted to the Welsh Government by the deadline of 9th September 2022.

By March 2023, all public sector organisations in Wales will be required to publish their plans to achieve net zero. Beginning in April 2022, working in conjunction with the Carbon Trust, the Council embarked on a project to produce a Decarbonisation Strategy for RCTCBC, together with an accompanying Action Plan. The Decarbonisation Strategy is expected to be completed during the 3rd quarter of 2022/23. Also, the content and conclusions of the Strategy and Action Plan will be used to guide future policy direction and activities in this area, as the Council strives towards it's NZC ambitions.

6.2 Electric Vehicle Charging & Transportation Working Group

A new EV Charging Strategy for RCT was agreed by Cabinet during November 2021, then went through further planned scrutiny during December, with the strategy then published in January 2022.

The Group have now produced an 'accompanying' EV Charging Implementation Plan and a 'public facing' Action Plan. This group of documents are devised to both inform the public and to enable all service areas to understand the essential roles they need to play in support of the Council's EV Charging journey.

The Implementation Plan (included as Appendix 'A') also comprises an 'Action Plan' (in Appendix 'B') which states clear goals for the Council to aspire towards, including short, medium and long-term targets in the transition to the use of electric vehicles. This is Action Plan is intended to be 'Public Facing' and the milestones contained therein are linked to the Council's 'Climate Change Strategy'. The Council will use this 'link'

to monitor improvements in the delivery of charging infrastructure by providing updates on progress against the Action Plan.

The Group have also compiled an accompanying document, an Internal Delivery Plan (IDP) which is retained for internal use only. The purpose of the IDP is to support the other two documents in providing actions and milestones for all service areas of the Council, with the named Officers and Service Areas responsible for the delivery of each task / milestone clearly identified.

The Council recognises the need to establish a recommended order of processes that installers should follow in the delivery of charging infrastructure. As such, these steps will be identified and summarised in the form of a Delivery Model applicable to off-street charging. Using this model will ensure the necessary processes are adhered to, in supporting the delivery of charging infrastructure across the County Borough. In conjunction with this, a Pre-Installation Checklist of questions to consider is being developed with the aim of providing guiding through the selection process. Whilst this is included as a milestone in the IDP, work has already started and an example of what this may look like is included in Appendix 'C'.

Key members of the Group have also been involved in feasibility works to inform the Ultra-low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV) Transition Plan, and this has recently been the subject of a separate Cabinet Report with the purpose of decarbonising the Council's fleet.

In addition to the above, the Council's progress to date, includes:

- Liaising with Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) to put in place 82 EV charging bays at 31 locations during this f/y 2022/23
- Continuing discussions with the CCR to increase the number of charging points over the next 12 months
- Ongoing assessment of further potential locations in order to increase the availability of EV charging points
- Setting up dedicated EV charging web presence and email address to enable residents to make direct contact with their queries
- Providing relevant comms on the progress of the programme via a dedicated campaigns page
- Continued support to WG with the electric vehicle taxi pilot
- Cabinet approval has been given to move forward with the multi-faceted ULEV Fleet Transition Plan (as mentioned above).

6.3 Natures Assets Working Group

The Group are looking at carbon capture and sequestration opportunities by restoring failing peatlands and naturalising areas, greening of town centres and ongoing tree planting, whilst also improving ecology and biodiversity. Such potential projects could have a substantial impact on the Council's carbon footprint, as well as improving air quality, whilst also assisting with ground water management.

The group appointed a specialist to investigate and report on RCT's peatland assets, the outcome of which is the subject of a separate and specific report.

The group are also looking at sequestration opportunities as well as 'greening' our town centres by introducing rain gardens, natural tree regeneration, hedgerows and tree planting projects. A positive step forward together with recent successful application for recognition under the 'Queens Green Canopy' initiative, where one of our ancient woodlands has been recognised and awarded the honorary title. The Group's woodland work will form part of the proposed Tree Planting Proposals, and this has already been detailed in the form of a verbal update at a previous meeting.

6.4 Community Activity, Comms and Engagement

The group continues to support the Council's work to reduce carbon emissions both within the Council and across the County Borough through the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy – 'Think Climate RCT', and in particular 'Think Climate -People'. Progress in the work programme to date is as follows.

Continuing to identify, categorise and map current 'Community Activity' linked to Climate or other Environment related projects across the County Borough. Since the start of this work, agreement has been reached with the Cwm Taf Public Services Board to resource the project within its support arrangements and further develop this project so that all PSB partners, can share and maximise resources and information. The mapping categories to date include relevant Nature-Based projects, Energy Generation, Food Production, Arts and Reuse projects.

Continuing to identify existing networks and contributing to the development of new community networks e.g. the RCT Community Action Network. Attitudes to Climate Change within communities currently ranges from excellent ground-breaking projects to clear resistance. Knowing and using this information will help to inform and shape our engagement activity to encourage and support the lifestyle choices that residents can make to tackle climate change.

Working with third sector partners to seek, encourage and support relevant funding bids to support community projects.

Implementing a 'Comms' programme that provides useful information to residents, showcases the Council's work, complements related engagement projects e.g. EV Charging, 'Lets Talk Wildflowers' and the Tree and Woodland Strategy, and also supports national campaigns through social media and the Council's Climate Change Web presence, which is currently being refreshed.

Strengthening our plans to continue the Climate Change Conversation using new and creative 'Engagement' methods and working more closely with the third sector and communities to capture and understand local impact and share ideas to maximise our joint impact. Part of this work includes refreshing the 'Let's Talk' web platform and content, for

climate related projects in particular. An update of the engagement programme and associated projects is scheduled for the Climate Change Sub Committee in December.

Accelerating our work with schools and with representative groups of young people in particular through the Youth Forum and YEP Service.

Widening engagement with staff through Staff Net Zero Network and Teams Green Space. Most recently a Welsh Channel has been established within the Green Space which will facilitate and encourage staff networking on climate related matters in the medium of Welsh as well as provide an opportunity for people to use and practice their Welsh Language skills in a safe supportive internal space.

The wider work programme is expected to expand with the publication of the 'Think Climate RCT' Strategy, the launch of Council wide Climate Change training and awareness raising, the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee's work programme and developments arising from the and involvement of the Council's new Climate Champion.

6.5 Built Assets & Construction Working Group

This Group was formed later than the other groups, during early 2022, with the 'purpose' of the group being to assist in the coordination and development of a programme to address net zero across the corporate portfolio, and to compliment and augment the currently running 'Carbon Reduction Programme'. The 'focus' will be to assess the Council's assets with a strategic approach to make the assets as efficient as practical and prepare for a phased transition to low carbon solutions as the utility networks adapt.

The Group currently are looking at the corporate building assets portfolio and bringing together service areas to review and assess decarbonisation strategies. They have commissioned a pilot sample of net zero reports, from specialists and, having recently received the proposals, are now currently assessing their value.

Following the publication of the RCTCBC Decarbonisation Strategy & Action Plan, expected in Q3 of 2022/23, the Group will then move forward following with this as overarching guidance.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 7.1 This supporting report is for the purpose of update and consequently an Equality Impact Assessment is not required with regard to this report.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This supporting report is for the purpose of update and consequently Welsh Language Impact Assessment is not required with regard to this report, however a copy can be made available in Welsh if requested.

9. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

9.1 There are no consultation requirements at present with regards to this supporting report.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

10.1 All existing 'live' projects are currently funded through relevant cost centres and an existing enabling budget so there are no further financial implications aligned to this interim report.

10.2 The recent wholesale market rises in energy costs, together with the future unpredictability of the market, mean that constant review and reassessment of the viability of projects will now be necessary on a more frequent basis.

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 purpose of the report is to provide an interim update report and any future actions that arise as a result of the recommendations of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee report will take full regard to the seven national wellbeing goals.

13. CONCLUSION

13.1 This report provides background information and an update on the current situation with regards to the issues covered by the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee. It provides updates on the proposals for the Council to build and finance potential solar and wind schemes that will make a significant contribution to the Council achieving its Net Zero Carbon target. It also provides key updates on other keynote associated strategies and plans to reduce the Council's Carbon impact.

Contact Officers: *David Powell* *01443 424 144*
 Anthony Roberts *01443 281 146*

Appendices to follow on:

- **Appendix 'A': EV Charging Implementation Plan** (*Draft Form*)
- **Appendix 'B': EV Charging Public Facing Action Plan** (*Published Example*)
- **Appendix 'C': EV Charging Pre-Installation Checklist** (*Example Only*)

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Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Electric Vehicle Charging 'Implementation Plan'

Contents

1.0	3
Introduction and Context	3
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Our Vision and Objectives.....	3
2.0	4
Delivery of EV Charging Infrastructure	4
2.1	4
Site Selection.....	4
2.2 Site Design & Accessibility.....	5
2.3 Initial Electrical Installation.....	6
2.4	7
EV Charging Unit	7
2.5 Operation & Security.....	7
3.0 Diverse Charging Opportunities	8
3.1 Taxi Charging.....	8
3.2 Bus Charging.....	8
3.3 Minor Vehicles	8
3.4 Car Clubs	8
4.0 Public Facing Action Plan	9
Glossary.....	10
Vehicle Types:	10
Charging:	10
Appendix	11
<i>Figure 1: RCTCBC EV Charging Road Map</i>	11
<i>Figure 2: RCTCBC Electric Vehicle Charging Ambitions</i>	12
<i>Figure 3: Current schemes delivering EV charge points across Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council</i>	13
<i>Figure 4: Available Funding Schemes from the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles (OZEV), as of August 2022</i>	14
<i>Figure 5: An Assessment of Charge Point Type Suitability, Connection Costs and Connection Timescales for Fast (7kW), Fast (22kW) and Rapid (43kW+)</i> . Source: WPD EV Strategy April 2020. ...	15
<i>Figure 6: Charge point Cost Estimates per Vehicle Class</i>	16

1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Introduction

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is committed to promoting and, where appropriate, enabling a comprehensive charging network, by increasing the provision of electric vehicle charging points across the County Borough.

As such, it is the intention of this Electric Vehicle Charging Implementation Plan and subsequent Internal Delivery Plan and Public Facing Action Plan to set out the Council's expectations for the increased provision of charging infrastructure across the County Borough. The documents will provide information, advice, and guidance to potential developers on the installation planning process for different site types, with a primary focus on off-street charging locations across the County Borough.

1.2 Our Vision and Objectives

The EV Charging Implementation Plan has been produced following the publication of an [Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy](#). The Strategy identifies desired outcomes and aspirations which aim to coordinate a County Borough wide approach to promote and encourage the development of a robust electrical vehicle charging network in the short, medium, and long term. The purpose of this Implementation Plan is to set out how the Council intends to support the delivery of charging infrastructure across the County Borough and recommends the short, medium, and ongoing actions required, as highlighted in Figure 1, see Appendix. The Implementation Plan is based on the ten ambitions clearly stated within the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, see Appendix Figure 2.

It is the aim of the Implementation Plan to:

- Identify key themes to support the Council's delivery of charging infrastructure across the County Borough.
- Provide guidance and advice on best practice to develop a comprehensive network of electric vehicle charge points that both responds to existing demand for EV infrastructure and provides for and accelerates the uptake of electric vehicles in the future.
- Establish a clear set of actions to drive the delivery of the Council's EV Charging Ambitions set in figure 2.

2.0 Delivery of EV Charging Infrastructure

There is a need to scale up the EV charging infrastructure significantly to enable the growth of electric vehicle ownership. Whilst the clear ambition would be to have EV charging facilities in every area of the County Borough, the short term rollout of EV chargers will initially focus on the installation of charging infrastructure at off-road destination sites. Under the [Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority \(CCRTA\)](#), the Council is in the process of installing publicly accessible charge points at 31 Council car parks.

The Council recognise the need to establish a recommended order of processes that installers should follow in the delivery of charging infrastructure. As such, these steps will be identified and summarised in the form of a Delivery Model applicable to off-street charging. Using this model will ensure the necessary processes are adhered to in supporting the delivery of charging infrastructure across the County Borough. In conjunction with this, a Pre-Installation Checklist of questions to consider will be developed to guide installers through the installation process.

This Implementation Plan identifies five key themes to set out the considerations that should be made when installing charging infrastructure, see sections 2.1 to 2.5. These themes will be used to inform the development of the Delivery Model and Pre-Installation Checklist.

2.1 Site Selection

An analysis of site suitability will need to take place when assessing locations for EV charging installations to ensure each site meets the crucial requirements. Key considerations that should be made in assessing site suitability include target use, the current provision of charge points in the area, accessibility, and parking bay availability.

2.1.1 Baseline Review of Current Charging Provision and Opportunities for Expansion

The expected growth rate in Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) ownership throughout the UK, Wales, and RCT emphasises the need to increase charging provision across the County Borough to match demand. To set a baseline, a mapping exercise will be undertaken to set out the locations of EV charge points both installed and pending across Rhondda Cynon Taf. The map will be used to inform potential developers of the current provision of charging infrastructure to help identify potential future EV charge point locations.

In addition, the Council is working with the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority to roll out charge points at Council-owned car parks across the County Borough. Figure 3, see appendix, illustrates a summary of the current schemes that are delivering EV charge points across the County Borough. This includes the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority, new school developments, Council fleet depots, and non-domestic buildings.

2.1.2 Identification of available funding sources

The [Office for Zero Emission Vehicles \(OZEV\)](#) has a set of grant funding schemes that may be available to help cover the costs of purchase and installation of EV charging infrastructure. The funding schemes available, as of August 2022, are summarised in Figure 4, see appendix.

2.2 Site Design & Accessibility

There are several considerations that should be made in the design and layout of the charge point, parking bay, and additional infrastructure to ensure safety, accessibility, and ease of use.

2.2.1 Public Charging at Council-Owned Car parks

Destination charging, primarily within Council-owned car parks and other sites including Leisure Centres, Parks, and Cultural attractions, is expected to play a key role in the future provision of charge point infrastructure. Car park charging will provide one of the most expedient ways for users to charge their vehicles. It is the Council's ambition to examine and assess its portfolio of Council-owned land, to encourage the rollout of EV charging infrastructure on current assets, and maximise availability and accessibility, eliminating the barriers to electric vehicle uptake.

The installation of charge points in all new public car park developments should permit compliance with accessibility standards set out by the Department for Transport (DfT) in partnership with [Motability](#). The new BSI PAS:1899 Accessibility Standard for EV Charging Infrastructure is expected to be launched in Autumn 2022. PAS 1899:2022 is a new specification on accessible public charge points for electric powered vehicles. It covers the design and placement of charge points, including the location spacing and surrounding environment, as well as the information, signals and indicators to be provided. Accessibility is not restricted to the disabled as it will also include non-driving less-abled people who need to use the charging points and the ageing population in the UK.

The provision of sufficient signage and parking bay markings should be considered to raise public awareness, and to ensure the parking bays are reserved for the use of electric vehicles only. When installing signage, a decision will have to be made on the specified time allowance for vehicles to park within the bay. Following the delivery of this Implementation Plan, a set of best practice guidance will be produced to guide the appropriate installation of charging infrastructure.

2.2.2 School Carpark Charging

Under Policy 12 of [Future Wales: The National Plan 2040](#), all new schools are required to include a minimum of 10% of all parking spaces for EV charging. In addition, the Council will be investigating all other school car parks to determine their suitability for retrofitting EV charging facilities. Whilst these EV charging units will predominantly be used by school vehicles e.g. minibuses and by school staff, there is the potential for these charging units to be made available for residents to use outside of school opening hours. However, this presents a challenge in that allowing public access to the charging units, school buildings, and grounds must also be kept secure. There may be a potential to develop a more open, 'outer cordon' where the charging units are located and a securer 'inner cordon' protecting the school pupils and buildings.

2.2.3 Visitor, Customer and Workplace charging at Private, Third Sector and Council Sites

The UK Government is supporting the rollout of workplace charging by subsidising the cost of installing EV charging units through the Workplace Charging Scheme. [Planning Policy Wales 11](#) (PPW11) sets out the Welsh Government's expectation that the planning system should encourage the provision of ULEV charging points as part of any new development. For non-residential, new, and substantially refurbished developments, there is a minimum requirement for 10% of parking spaces to have provision for EV charging.

The transition of the Council Fleet to ULEV domination will require the availability of charging infrastructure near to where vehicles are stored, for example within depots. The Council's plan to transition from an Internal Combustion Engine, (ICE), fleet to an Ultra-low Emissions Vehicles, (ULEV), fleet over the next 6 years will be facilitated in line with the ULEV Transition Plan.

Whilst the Council fleet will predominantly be charged overnight, the Council will consider the feasibility of allowing staff to use the charge points during the working day where this is deemed both practicable, safe, and secure. While recognising that there may be good opportunities to provide charge points on Council land, there are also considerable challenges, not least the capacity of the local electricity supply network and the need for an ongoing maintenance regime, to ensure all charging units are in a safe and usable condition.

2.2.4 Residential Charging

Welsh Government planning requirements have been updated to ensure that all new domestic properties with off-street parking must be EV charging ready, i.e. that the electrical connections are already available in the property, although it will be for new homeowners to decide when to install the actual charging units.

Rhondda Cynon Taf, like most of South Wales, is broadly characterised by rows of terraced housing and narrow congested roads and thus presents challenges when deciding how to guide the expansion of the EV charging network. Installers should consult with Sections [162](#), [133](#) and [152](#) of the Highways Act for further information relating to the legal position an individual will face when considering residential charging infrastructure.

The Council recognises the importance of providing charging infrastructure throughout the County Borough, in both residential and public locations. As such, the Council will take the necessary steps to ensure that charge point provision is provided in locations with limited opportunities for EV charging at destination sites and will examine the potential opportunities to create charging facilities close to residential areas. This approach will seek to alleviate the issues around accessibility and safety concerns associated with on-street residential charge point installation.

2.2.5 Accessibility and Welsh Language Requirements

As an inclusive Council, we are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and access in all aspects of our activities, including within the area of EV charging provision. In developing and implementing the rollout of charging infrastructure, the Council will ensure it meets its obligations under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#) and make decisions with due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equal opportunity.

2.3 Initial Electrical Installation

The Council recognises that the electrical capacity across the County Borough is varying in quality and strength. As such, the ability to rollout charging infrastructure is ultimately dependent on the capacity of the local electricity network to support it. The Council will ensure early engagement with Western Power Distribution (WPD) to determine the sufficiency of grid capacity and the cost implications of upgrading the network if needed. The

Council will also assess its potential for the development and utilisation of renewable energy generation across its estate in providing power for charging hubs.

2.3.1 Active and Passive Charge Point Provision

When choosing the type of charge point technology to install at the chosen site, installers should also consider the scalability of charging technology, along with their associated costs. Typically, installers will have to assess the suitability of installing an active or passive charge point. Active charging points are fully wired and connected, complete with the required electrical capacity and are ready to use to charge any given vehicle at designated parking bays. Passive charging points have the necessary infrastructure provision in place to ensure the simple installation and activation of a charging point at a future date. Arrangements that must be made in advance of designating a space for passive EV charging use, should include the necessary underlying infrastructure, such as capacity in the local electricity distribution network, cable highways to the parking bay(s), and other such considerations.

2.4 EV Charging Unit

2.4.1 Charging Type Suitability

Considerations should be given to the usage and purpose of the site when choosing the appropriate charging infrastructure to install. Information on the different speeds of charge points is provided in Figure 5, see Appendix. It is expected that fast charge points will become the standard for charging infrastructure across the County Borough due to their suitability for charging across a large range of site types, together with electrical supply network issues. This Implementation Plan does not consider the use of trickle and slow charging infrastructure in the roll out across the County Borough as their slow charging speeds render them largely unsuitable for public charging use.

2.4.2 Analysis of Cost

All costs related to the supply, installation, operation, and maintenance of the charge point infrastructure will need to be considered and appropriately resourced. The estimated costs per EV charge point for a range of vehicles referenced throughout the Strategy and Implementation Plan are presented in Figure 6, see Appendix. In addition to the cost per charge point further costs will be accrued for the charger management system, annual maintenance, protective bollard or kerbs, groundworks and signage and potential network upgrades of the site's maximum import capacity (kVA).

2.5 Operation & Security

2.5.1 Council Enquiries Contact

The Council will establish a single point of contact for all enquiries relating to the installation of charge points on Council-owned land (EVCharging@rctcbc.gov.uk). Furthermore, the Council will assess the need for additional resources within the Council's staffing structure to aid the delivery of EV charging infrastructure.

Security is of paramount importance to the rollout of charging infrastructure to ensure security and wellbeing. As such, all installations should consider and implement appropriate CCTV coverage of the area, sufficient lighting to ensure visibility during poor weather and at

night and the availability of a helpline to enable all users of the charge point to seek help and support if needed.

3.0 Diverse Charging Opportunities

Though the Council is not directly responsible for the operation of bus, minor vehicle and car club transport, the Council hopes to continue to engage with partners in aim of realising all available funding opportunities and facilitating the growth in charge point provision across the County Borough.

3.1 Taxi Charging

Taxis (Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles) in RCT are licensed by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council as the Licensing Authority. The Council will support the work carried out by the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority (CCRTA) to establish a charging network for electric taxis across the region, The Council will work in partnership to identify key locations where the most advantageous charge points can be installed to facilitate the usage of EVs by taxi operators.

3.2 Bus Charging

Although the Council does not operate any public service buses, the Council will periodically consult with local bus operators, should the need arise for charging points at our principal bus stations. As a Council, we will also work with contractors providing outsourced services such as home to school transport to ensure sufficient charging infrastructure is provided, should the need arise. We will continue to review technological advancements in partnership with bus operators, Government, and industry to develop a vision for a clean bus fleet that is commercially feasible and sustainable.

3.3 Minor Vehicles

This section will relate to the charging of E-Motorcycles, E-Mopeds, E-Bicycles and Mobility scooters. Some E-Motorcycles and E-Mopeds have the potential to recharge at public charging stations using Slow (3 – 7 kW) units. However, E-Bicycles and mobility scooters are limited in that they can only be recharged using a standard 3-pin socket and cannot use public charging stations.

The Council will ensure that consideration is given to all modes of Minor Vehicle transportation by investigating options to provide indoor public charging facilities for the detachable batteries only. This would require that the vehicles (E-Bikes and Mobility Scooters) be parked up and secured as normal whilst battery charging facilities are made available within publicly accessible buildings or sites, (e.g. public libraries or parks buildings).

3.4 Car Clubs

The Council will continue to work with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) Team to support the development of EV Car Clubs in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The encouragement of such schemes will enable positive socio-economic benefits by increasing access to electric vehicles for those who do not have the means or inclination to purchase one. The Council will also consider the opportunity of such Car Clubs amongst its grey fleet.

4.0 Public Facing Action Plan

In support of delivering the 'Ambitions' set out within the EV Charging Strategy, see figure 2, the commitments set out in the Council's Climate Change Strategy, and the successful rollout of charging infrastructure across the County Borough, a Public Facing Action Plan and an Internal Delivery Plan have been developed.

The purpose of the Public Facing Action Plan will be to establish actions and measures which will be used to monitor improvements in the delivery of charging infrastructure throughout the County Borough by providing updates on progress against the Action Plan. This will include:

- The number of electric vehicle charge points installed across the County Borough.
- The number of ULEV owned across the County Borough.
- The proportion of electric vehicles within the Council's owned fleet.
- The number of enquiries from members of the public regarding EV charge point installations.

The purpose of the Internal Delivery Plan is to set out the actions, progress milestones and their expected timeframe for completion, as required by each Service Area of the Council.

The Internal Delivery Plan details the following information:

- Action description
- Action reference number
- Sub-action/ Milestone
- Sub-action/ Milestone reference number
- Delivery Date
- Accountable Officer
- Service Area Responsible

Glossary

Vehicle Types:

Electric Vehicle (EV) - Term used to encompass all vehicles that use electricity as a fuel source.

Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) - A vehicle that produces less than 75g of Carbon Dioxide for each kilometre driven.

RCV Fleet – Refuse Collection Vehicle.

HGV Fleet – Heavy goods vehicles. A 4-wheeled vehicles constructed for transporting goods. Must have a gross weight of 3.5 tonnes or less.

LGV Fleet – Light goods vehicles. Larger vehicles constructed for transporting goods. Must have a weight greater than 3.5 tonnes.

Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) - A vehicle that runs entirely on electricity powered by a battery and charged using a dedicated charge point using mains electricity supply.

Hybrids - Combustion engine and electric propulsion motor. Battery charged through regenerative braking, very low zero emission range.

Grey Fleet – Any vehicles that do not belong to a company or organisation, but which are used for business travel. This may include a vehicle purchased via an employee ownership scheme, a privately rented vehicle, or a privately owned vehicle.

Charging:

Trickle Charge - The slowest form of charge at less than 2kW using a 3-pin plug. Time intensive, usually used for at-home overnight charging.

Slow Charge - Typically charge at less than 7kW and generally used for overnight charging of BEVs and top ups for hybrid vehicles, with a charge-up time of 8- 12 hours. Faster charging times and better safety features than 3-pin plugs.

Fast Charge - Typically charge at 7- 22kW with faster charging times which enable users to make better use of off-peak energy tariffs. Typical charge-up time of 1.5- 5 hours.

Rapid/ Ultra Rapid Charge - Typically charge at 43- 350kW with an average charge time between 15- 45 minutes. These are generally located at service stations and public locations.

Kilowatt (kW) - A measure of working power available.

Kilowatt Hour (kWh) – A measure of energy stored or used, also used to measure EV battery energy use.

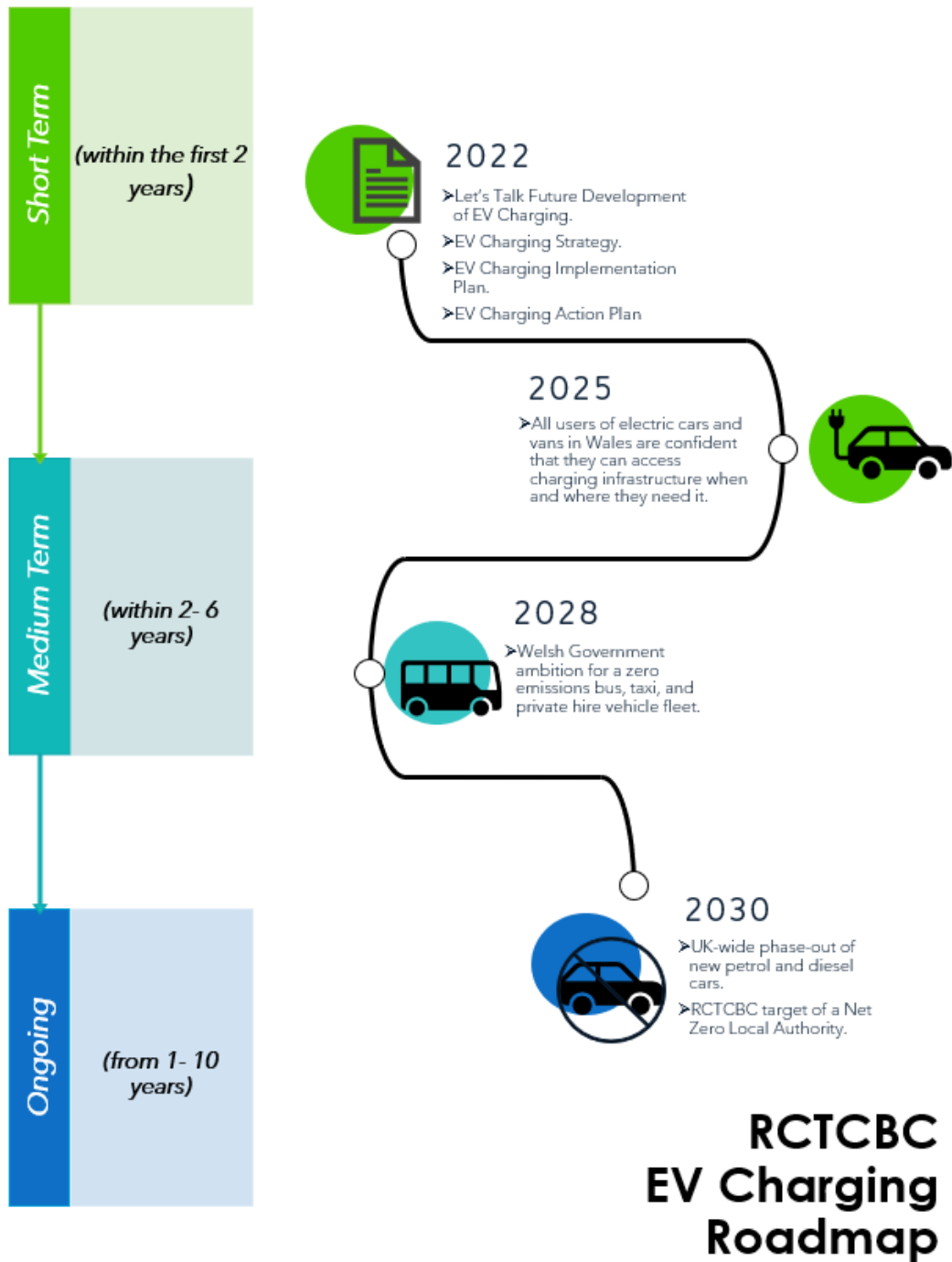


Figure 1: RCTCBC EV Charging Road Map.

EV Charging Strategy Ambitions

Section	Ambition	Priority/ Timescale
A.1	Develop an Implementation Plan to roll out an EV Charging infrastructure aligned to future demand with suitable speed and power chargers for all vehicles including cars, taxis, buses, e-motorcycles, e-bicycles, mobility scooters.	
A.2	Establish the need for EV Infrastructure by working with partners, where applicable, to secure external funding opportunities and help meet demand.	
A.3	Review our Planning Policies, whilst working with landowners and developers to ensure the EV charge point opportunities are identified and pursued, to promote sustainable methods of transportation.	
A.4	Monitor air quality, to evaluate the relationship between increased EV uptake and improved air quality, expectantly reducing the harmful effects of air pollutants on public health.	
A.5	Develop a series of models for funding, deployment, and management.	
A.6	Identify all suitable locations for potential 'Destination Charging' sites.	
A.7	Identify suitable locations for 'Workplace Charging' across all RCT sites and work with other sectors, where applicable, to increase workplace charging, to meet demand as appropriate.	
A.8	Work with residents to raise awareness and establish the best means of charging vehicles where planning, physical and/or technical constraints mean that their preferred method of charging is not feasible or achievable.	
A.9	Explore potential opportunities for introduction of car clubs within the County Borough.	
A.10	Transform our fleet towards more sustainable methods of transportation, in a planned and practical way.	



Figure 2: RCTCBC Electric Vehicle Charging Ambitions.

Current EV Charge Point Schemes Utilised by RCTCBC



CCRTA: The CCRTA plan to install public-use EV charging points at 31 publicly accessible car park sites across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

New School Developments: The Council's Local Development Plan requires all new school car parks to provide a minimum of 10% active charging units with the aspiration of installing an additional 10% of passive charging units.



Council Depots: The Council have secured funding from Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) and aim to focus spending on installing charging units within the Council's depot sites for fleet vehicle charging.

Non-domestic buildings: The Welsh Government's Future Wales Planning Policy Plan 2040 sets out that all new or substantially refurbished non-domestic buildings with dedicated parking will be required to have at least 10% of parking spaces allocated for EV charging.



Figure 3: Current schemes delivering EV charge points across Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

Funding Schemes

The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles has a set of grant funding schemes that are available to help support the costs of purchase and installation on EV charging infrastructure.

Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS)

This scheme is available to businesses, charities and public sector organisations. Covers 75% of the total costs of purchase and installation at off-street facilities with parking spaces dedicated wholly for staff and/ or fleet vehicle parking.

It will be the responsibility of the Charge Point Owner to maintain the charge point for a minimum of 3 years.

Maximum of £350 per charge point unit.



Maximum of 40 charge point units across all sites per applicant.



Further information available [here](#)

On-Street Residential Charging Scheme (ORCS)

This scheme is available to Local Authorities. Covers 60% of eligible capital costs for on-street EV charge points in locations where residential off-street charging is unavailable.

In areas where on-street charging is difficult to achieve, applications for car park sites owned by the local authority near residential areas will be considered.

Maximum of £13,000 per charge point installation.



Projects with a completion date before 31st March 2023 will be considered.



Further information available [here](#)

Electric Vehicle Charge Point Grant

This scheme is available for flat owner-occupiers and people living in rented properties. Covers 75% of the costs of one charge point for properties with designated off-street parking.

The customer must own a qualifying vehicle.

Maximum of £350 per charge point installation.



Further information available [here](#)

All information provided is correct as of August 2022.

Figure 4: Available Funding Schemes from the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles (OZEV), as of August 2022.



Assessment of Charging Type Suitability



Fast (7kW)

Approx. Charging Time: 5 hours

Approx. Connection Cost: £1,000 – 3,000

Approx. Connection Lead Time: 4 – 8 weeks

Network & Third Party Considerations: Likely upgrade to service cable and local mains

Appropriate sites include:

- Residential areas
- Domestic premises with off-street parking
- Top-up charging at places of work



Fast (22kW)

Approx. Charging Time: 1.5 hours

Approx. Connection Cost: £3,500 – 12,000

Approx. Connection Lead Time: 8 – 12 weeks

Network & Third Party Considerations: Street works and permissions

Appropriate sites include:

- Car parks
- Places of work
- Domestic premises with off-street parking

Please note: the installation of fast charge points on domestic premises would require a three phase supply or capacity upgrade.



Rapid (43kW+)

Approx. Charging Time: 45 minutes

Approx. Connection Cost: £3,500 – 12,000

Approx. Connection Lead Time: 8 – 12 weeks

Network & Third Party Considerations: Street works and permissions

Appropriate sites include:

- Shops and supermarkets
- Near busy 'A' roads or motorways

Suited to on the go charging and charging at short dwell time locations due to their rapid charging speeds.

Figure 5: An Assessment of Charge Point Type Suitability, Connection Costs and Connection Timescales for Fast (7kW), Fast (22kW) and Rapid (43kW+). Source: [WPD EV Strategy April 2020](#).

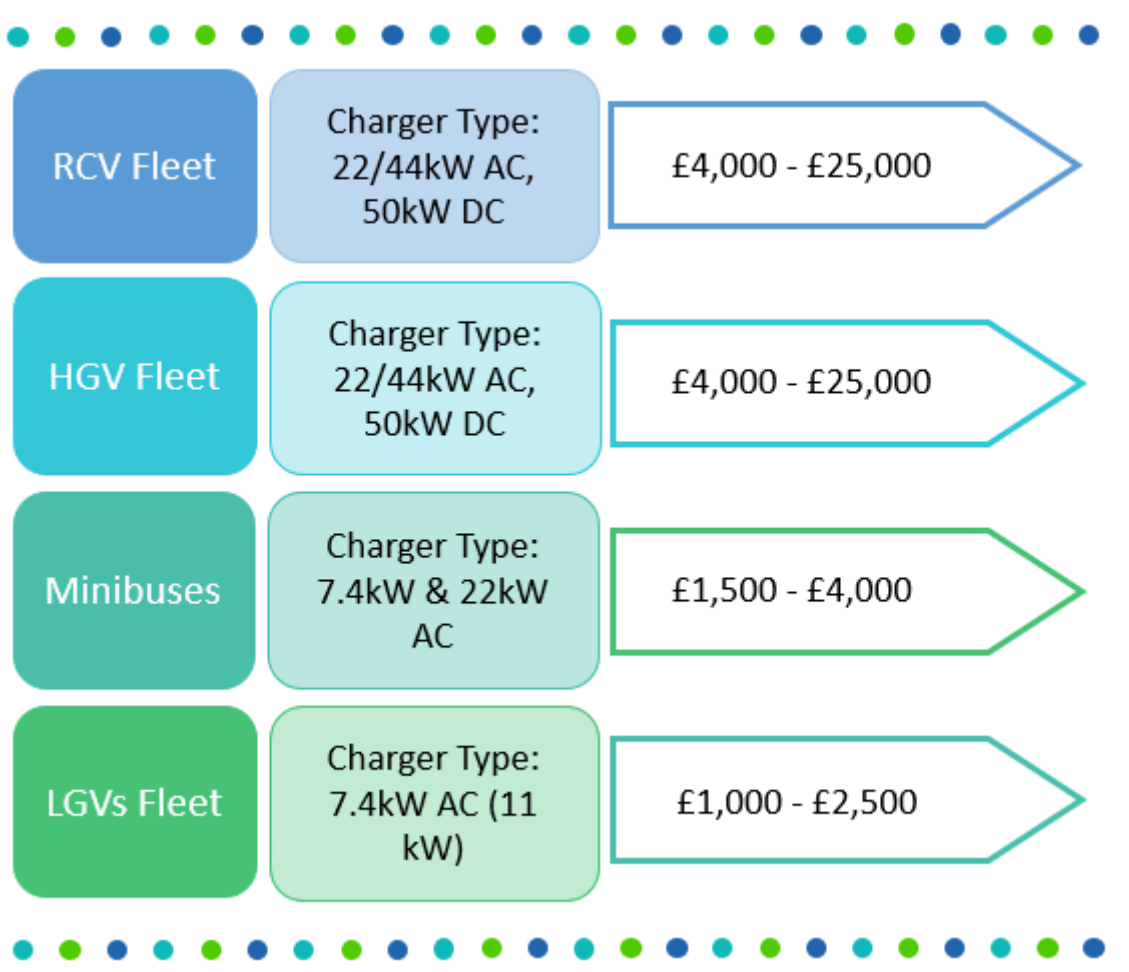
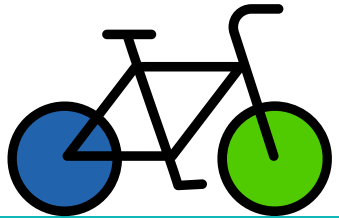


Figure 6: Charge point Cost Estimates per Vehicle Class.

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Action Plan



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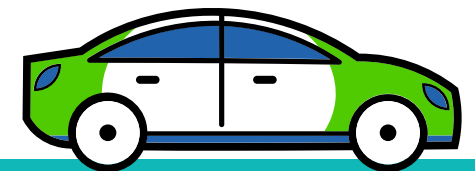
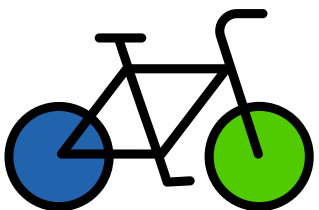
Develop the Council's Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC) Strategy and supporting Implementation Plan, that will accommodate the transport needs of existing and future electric vehicle users.

Timescales



Page 64

Ref	MEASURES	Delivery Date	Does this action appear in any another plan/strategy?
	that will help to track this Action	(Month/ Year)	
A01 - M01	Develop the RCT EV Charging Strategy and publish on RCT website.	2022	Climate Change Strategy
A01 - M02	Develop RCT EV Charging Implementation Plan.	2022	
A01 - M03	Develop RCT EV Charging Action Plan to support the Implementation Plan.	2022	



Ref #A02

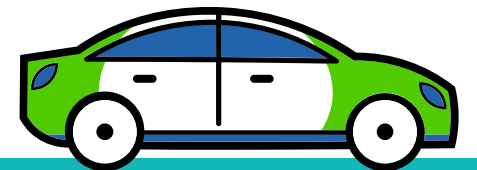
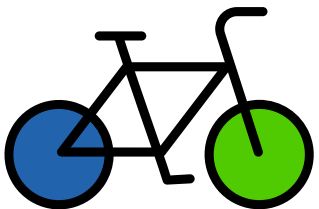
Review the process by which Council fleet vehicles are replaced to ensure that ultra-low emission vehicles are considered as a preference wherever feasible and practicable.

Timescales



Page 65

Ref	MEASURES	Delivery Date	Does this action appear in any another plan/strategy?
	that will help to track this Action	(Month/ Year)	
A02 - M01	Research and develop a Transition Plan to help meet the Council’s goal of moving toward a ULEV fleet, working with Fleet Management, Corporate Estates, end users and their respective managers and the Council’s Procurement Section.	2023/24	Ultra Low Emissions (ULEV) Transition Plan
A02 - M03	Procure EV charging infrastructure that satisfies the implementation of a fleet replacement programme of Electric Vehicles or suitable Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.	Ongoing	

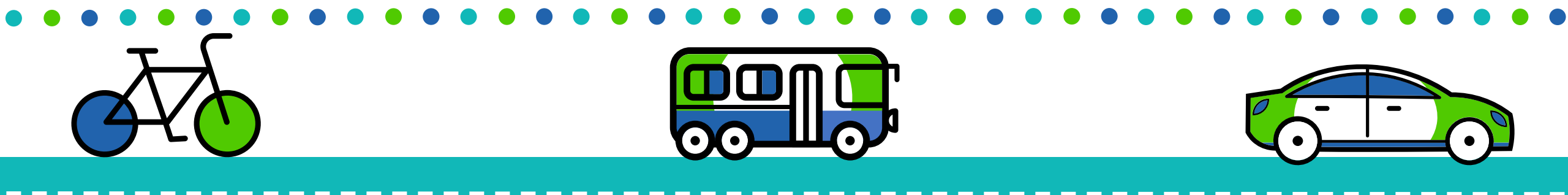
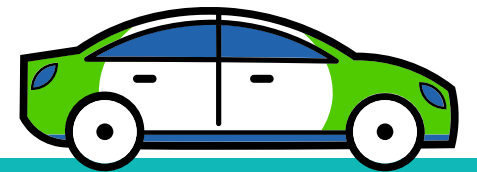
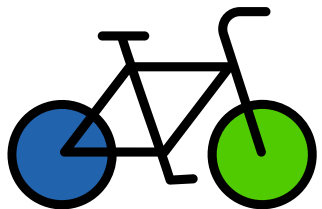


Working with the private sector to put in place and invest in an accessible County Borough Wide network of electric vehicle (EV) charging opportunities, to stimulate the market and widen EV charging opportunities. By 2025 we will ensure that all residents are within one mile of a publicly accessible EV charging point.

Timescales



Ref	MEASURES	Delivery Date	Does this action appear in any another plan/strategy?
	that will help to track this Action	(Month/ Year)	
A03 - M01	Increase the number of EV charging points installed at Council premises over next 5 years.	2027	Climate Change Strategy
A03 - M02	Increase in number of charging devices per 100,000 population by 2025.	2025	
A03 - M03	A publicly accessible EV Charging point within a mile of every resident by 2025.	2025	
A03 - M04	5% of bays in council owned car parks will be charging bays by 2028	2028	



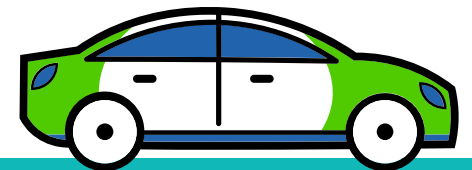
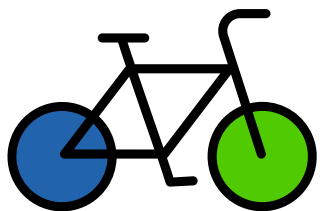
Ref #A04

Supporting public transport providers to become more sustainable and to make the switch from diesel to electric taxis and buses.

Timescales



Ref	MEASURES	Delivery Date	Does this action appear in any another plan/strategy?
	that will help to track this Action	(Month/ Year)	
A04 - M01	% shift to zero emission passenger vehicles by 2030.	2030	Climate Change Strategy



Ref #A05

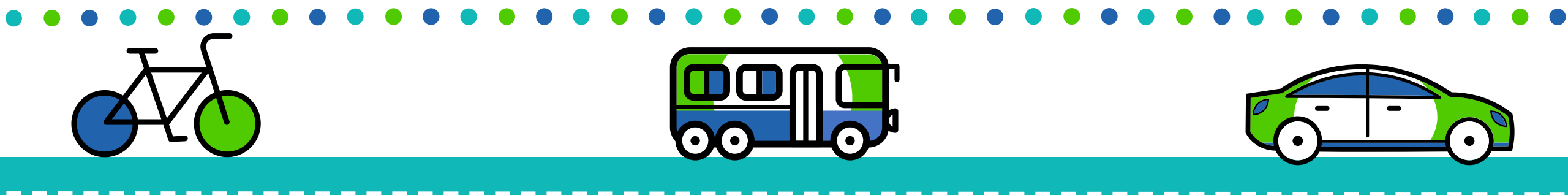
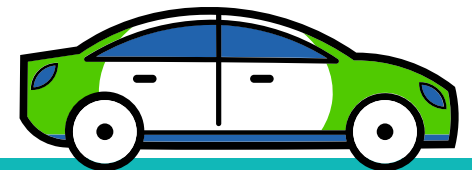
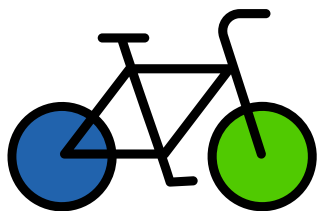
Ensuring that the transport services we commission, including Home to School, are zero or low carbon where possible.

Timescales



Page 68

Ref	MEASURES	Delivery Date	Does this action appear in any another plan/strategy?
	that will help to track this Action	(Month/ Year)	
A05 - M01	% of contracted Home to School buses and coaches that are EURO VI compliant or greater by 2025.	2030	Climate Change Strategy



ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE PRE-INSTALLATION CHECKLIST

Category	Question	Question	Feedback Comments
Site Selection	1.A	How was this particular site chosen?	
	2.A	Is Planning Permission required to install EV Charging units on this site?	
	3.A	Have EV charge point inquiries been received from members of the public in the locality?	
	4.A	Has an appropriate source of funding been identified?	
	5.A	Does the funding have a time constraint?	
	6.A	Has an EV charge point provider been identified?	
	7.A	Who will ultimately own the apparatus when all warranties expire?	
	8.A	Will there be an ongoing contractual commitment, and if so, to whom?	
	9.A	Is the appropriate insurance cover in place?	
Initial Electrical Installation	1.B	How many EV charge points are proposed and of what type?	
	2.B	Are the characteristics of the electrical supply at each location, suitable?	
	3.B	Is there sufficient electrical capacity on site and in the surrounding area?	
	4.B	Will a new independent electrical supply be needed to power the EV charge points?	
	5.B	Has any additional cost / project time relating to questions 2b to 4b been factored into the proposals?	
	6.B	Is there a supply 'flicker' risk to other users in the area?	
	7.B	Is general Surge Protection in place?	
	8.B	Is local Surge Protection in place?	
	9.B	Will Western Power Distribution (WPD) approval be needed?	
	10.B	If not (in relation to Q9b) have WPD been notified?	

Category	Question	Question	Feedback Comments
Site Design & Accessibility	1.C	Does the proposed site have a level and even surface i.e. Concrete or Tarmac?	
	2.C	Has the proposed site ben assessed against the EV Charging Accessibility Standard BSI PAS:1899 (2022)?	
	3.C	Is there sufficient space within each EV charge point bay for someone to exit their car and navigate around the vehicle using mobility equipment?	
	4.C	Has any consideration been given to users of larger wheel chair accessible vehicles?	
	5.C	Is the charge point going to be installed on a pavement?	
	6.C	If so (in relation to Q4c) accessibility and equality issues should be considered. Wherever possible, the charge point should be located by the curb edge and there should be a clear width of 2m on the pavement for pedestrians to pass the	
	7.C	Is there level access to the charge point unit, e.g. no kerb?	
	8.C	Are there any other obstructions e.g. bollards and is there sufficient space between them to allow for wheelchair access?	
	9.C	Are the charge point bay surface markings clear and understandable?	

Category	Question	Question	Feedback Comments
EV Charging Unit	1.D	Who will be able to use the EV charge point?	
	2.D	How will access be granted to use the EV charge point?	
	3.D	Will users be charged for use of the facility?	
	4.D	If so (in relation to Q3d) how will users be charged (e.g. will RFID cards or Apps be involved)?	
	5.D	How much will users be charged?	
	6.D	Will part of the charge be set aside for future upkeep (i.e. self funding model)?	
	7.D	If relevant, will staff be allowed to use facility and will there be time limits?	
	8.D	Will access be granted 24/7 & 365 days to the public?	
	9.D	Will the charge point instructions be in Welsh and English, with Welsh being the default language?	
	10.D	Is the charge point unit capable of displaying other languages i.e. multi-lingual screen?	
	11.D	Is the charge point low enough for a wheelchair user to reach the screen?	
	12.D	Is there clear colour contrast on the charging unit screen, with large enough text and bright enough lighting? Text should be visible both day and night and during all weather conditions.	
	13.D	Is the cost, speed and time of charging in a clear, consistent and easy to understand language?	
	14.D	Is there sufficient time allowed to set up the apparatus, before the charging unit 'time's out'?	
	15.D	Is there a cable management system for the charge point unit to prevent trailing cables and to take some of the weight of the cables?	
	16.D	Are the cables long enough to accommodate a variety of parking positions and charging port placements?	
	17.D	Is the charge point covered to prevent equipment and users from being affected by poor weather?	
	18.D	How long will the installation take?	
	19.D	Is there sufficient mobile network coverage available from all four major network operators (Vodafone, EE, O2 and Three) in the proposed EVCP area? This will ensure that EV Charging Unit can receive software updates and that all users are able to download the necessary App provisions needed for charging and payment.	

Category	Question	Question	Feedback Comments
Operation & Security	1.E	Is there a way for users to seek help, support and report faults (e.g. Helpline to call) and are those answering able to provide a Welsh language service and trained to provide suitable advice to all users including disabled drivers?	
	2.E	Will onsite staff be expected to provide support for drivers using the charging units?	
	3.E	Will onsite staff require training prior to the first use of the charging units?	
	4.E	Will daily inspection of the equipment and earthing arrangements be undertaken, who will undertake this task and will this be recorded?	
	5.E	Who will be responsible for its long-term maintenance and future upgrading?	
	6.E	Who will be responsible for enforcement for overstays, inappropriate parking, etc?	
	7.E	Is there sufficient lighting available for the charging unit to ensure visibility during poor weather conditions or at night?	
	8.E	Is there CCTV covering the charge point?	
	9.E	Is there adequate security on site?	
	10.E	Within the proposed location, is bilingual (Welsh & English) signage to be provided?	
	11.E	Does the signage clearly indicate any restrictions e.g. time limits, vehicle types?	
	12.E	Is there clear colour contrast, is the text large enough and is the language clear and consistent?	



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2022

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

Author(s): Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members on the progress of the 'Action for Nature' plan by the RCT Local Nature Partnership

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Members note the completion of the 'Action for Nature' website by the RCT Local Nature Partnership <https://rctlnp.wixsite.com/rct-actionfornature>.

3. 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. 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

- 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 (see appendix) 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. 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. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 8.1 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.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

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

10. 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. 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. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 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 & Prosperity Scrutiny

Contact Officer

Simon Gale (01443 281114)

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2022

PEATLANDS IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

Author(s): Elizabeth Dean / Richard Wistow

1. **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members on works relating to peatlands in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that members consider the progress reported, and endorse the proposed central objective for peatland management and the direction for future work.

3. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To take forward the next steps in the RCT peatland programme with specific consideration of peatland extent, condition and the restoration and management options for:
- CO₂ emission reductions,
 - Carbon storage,
 - Floodrisk reductions and
 - Biodiversity enhancement.

4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 In November 2021, Members received a [report](#) on 'Nature's Assets' which highlighted the importance of the peatland resource in RCT. Subsequently an officer working group was established to take forward work associated with this report.

- 4.2 Peatlands are the largest and most important stores of carbon in the natural environment in RCT. Peat is an organic-rich deposit that has accumulated, very slowly, in wet locations since the last ice-age. Peatlands provide important 'ecosystem services' like natural flood risk management, biodiversity, knowledge archives and cultural resources as well as carbon storage. As noted in our earlier report, measuring carbon storage and the way carbon and methane (a more powerful but shorter-lived greenhouse gas) move through the environment is extremely complex, and is the subject of much on-going research and investigation at the UK and Wales level.

5. WORK RELATING TO PEATBOGS

- 5.1 In RCT, we have significant information relating to our peatbogs, derived from site specific surveys, planning applications and local knowledge that can complement national research. The table in Appendix 1 identifies the past planning consents, granted by the Authority, which have included the restoration of peatland and associated habitats. These agreements with developers have been negotiated for some time now under the nature conservation requirements of policy AW8 in the RCT Local Development Plan 2011. Most are in the form of S106 agreements (typically for 25 years) although a few are enforced via conditions on the planning consent. These schemes may also be contributing to flood risk mitigation and carbon emission reductions, although this is an area that requires more research and it is not usually monitored by the developers.
- 5.2 Many of these habitat management plans are associated with renewable energy projects. National Grid's peat bog restoration scheme at Hirwaun attracted widespread attention around COP26 in Glasgow, see [press release](#). This scheme is the result of planning negotiations to protect an important biodiversity resource, but is also being recognised for its carbon storage importance.
- 5.3 In the last financial year, we let a contract to one of the UK's foremost peatland hydrologists, to undertake an RCT specific assessment building on, what at the time was, the latest Universal Peat Map of Wales (2015 UPM) and the UK carbon storage and emissions modelling (Evans et al 2017). This research informed the UK carbon accounts submitted to COP26 last year. It established that most peatlands in the UK, and similarly in RCT, are likely to be emitting carbon (about 3% of UK emissions), with only a few peatlands in 'good condition' and likely to be 'sequestering' (or taking in more) carbon. This is based on a land-use and condition model which proposes CO₂e (carbon di-oxide equivalent) emission rates derived from empirical research.

- 5.4 Arising from the RCT specific work so far, the proposed central objective for peatland management is:

To maximise ecosystem service provision from peatlands within the RCT area, with high value given to minimising Green House Gas (GHG) emissions from, and maximizing carbon storage within, peatlands.

- 5.5 This would encompass
- Mapping the presence and condition of peatlands
 - Quantifying carbon fluxes (as they contribute to net zero)
 - Identifying other 'ecosystem services' and
 - The investigation of cost-effective restoration.
- 5.6 The 2015 UPM provided a base map for the consultant's original RCT work but this has now been superseded by the publication of the new Map and [Data portal for Wales](#) (2022) which gives more detailed information and will feed into future UK /Wales GHG emissions inventories. Further work is now required to update the condition categories for RCT peatlands (based on the 2022 map) and to include additional information from RCT sources. This will create a GIS-based system of :
- RCT peatland extent and
 - RCT peatland condition categories
- 5.7 This will aid decision making on cost-effective restoration and provide data for Net Zero calculations as well as contributing to identifying opportunities for biodiversity and natural flood risk management. This work will be completed in the autumn. A PowerPoint presentation describing the work to date is included in Appendix 2.
- 5.8 The work undertaken so far has highlighted that peatlands in the worst condition are emitting the most carbon, and even partial restoration can reduce these emissions. Peatland condition is typically improved by raising the water-table and making them wetter. For peatlands to become 'sequestering', that is adding to their carbon store (albeit at a very slow rate), the water table needs to be close to the surface for much of the year, allowing the anaerobic (oxygen free) conditions for dead vegetation to be preserved and not break down.
- 5.9 The National Peatland Action Plan is a 5 year plan of peatland restoration in Wales. Peatlands can only deliver the full range of environmental benefits and services when in good ecological condition. NRW, who deliver the Plan, recently launched a grant scheme for 22/23 to enable grant recipients to develop costed restoration projects from September 2022 until April 2023. Working with the consultant

Rigare Ltd. has enabled RCT to identify a significant Council owned peatland as a potential site for future restoration works. An application to NRW was submitted on the 30th of June 2022 for a peatland restoration planning project at Cwmparc with a total project cost of £23,866.25. The grant funding amount requested totalled at £22,366.25. The project will involve partnership between the Council and Rigare Ltd. Offers to successful applicants will be issued in early September 2022.

- 5.10 In addition, the Authority's Flood Risk Management (FRM) department are developing a Natural Flood Management/Peat Bog Restoration project within the borough to explore how peat bog restoration may contribute to upland catchment management by reducing peak flows and providing a potential flood risk benefit to high risk communities downstream. The FRM department are exploring opportunities to work with the large wind farm sites located within the upper catchments of RCT, of which a large proportion of RCT's peat bogs are located. Baseline assessments and restoration works have already been carried out at the wind farm sites, making them excellent sites to model and further investigate the potential benefits of peat bog restoration for natural flood management.
- 5.11 As part of the Living Landscapes project, approved by cabinet in October 2021, (see [report](#)), grant funding has been obtained to undertake capital works at a number of sites in the current financial year. At least two of these sites contain small areas of peatland and the funding will facilitate cost effective future management of the stored carbon and the enhancement of their biodiversity.
- 5.12 Members will be aware that NRW manage a significant area of the peatland in RCT as part of the Welsh Government Woodland Estate. Officers have made observations to NRW on their recent Forest Resource Plans for the lower Rhondda, specifically in relation to these areas (including Pentre). As the National Peatland Action Plan includes afforested peatland as one of the six priorities, we would hope to progress further discussions of practical projects that could be taken forward with NRW.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 There are no implications as a direct result of this report.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Welsh language implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 8.1 The sub committee's discussion and recommendation will inform the cabinet decision

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 The immediate costs associated with this work can be met from existing budgets. Any restoration works would be subject to further consideration.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 No legal implications have been identified.

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

- 11.1 The peatland work contributes to the Council's priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan. Specifically, it contributes to 'People' by creating more natural communities that promote and maintain mental wellbeing and to 'Places' by Getting the best out of our environment by looking after and investing in our greenspaces and specifically delivering natural carbon storage solutions across the County Borough to enhance air quality and reduce the impact of greenhouse gasses.

- 11.2 It also reflects the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Sustainable management is based on long-term considerations and is focused on preventative and precautionary action. The strategy aims to involve all the relevant stakeholders and to integrate peatland restoration activity into the wider operations of the Council. It will contribute specifically to the Resilience and Global Responsibility goals of the Act, but in the longer term it could have implications for all the goals.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny

Contact Officer

Simon Gale (01443 281114)

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Appendix 1: Planning consents with long term peat restoration and / or habitat management plans for sites including peat.

S106 ref	site	description	notes
79	W of Boot Hill Tonyrefail (part of Parc Eirin, 4 fields in 3 applications)	Northern field (Davies homes) £25k 17/09/07, transferred to W617/0106 on 05/10/07. 25years (to 17/09/32)	KCS Management Plan Yes peat is on this site
132/135/ 200/200A	Parc Eirin Remainder of Parc Eirin	17/03/11 paid £25k, Butterfly habitat transferred 04/05/18 (Simon Humphries). £25k paid on 04/11/14 but no paperwork.	KCS, Management Plan Possible peat on this site
122/158/180	Between Maerdy coal tip and tynewedd forest and Fforch- orchy/Fforch Isaf	No land transfer or cash Right of way etc. habitat management requirements added in 158/180	8 turbines, habitat /hydrological management plan for peatbog restoration
167	Penycymoedd wind farm	No land transfer or cash to RCT. £3m habitat management Plan fund, ecology and peat protocol officer, 25 years? NPT/RCT Lottery 'Lost Peatlands' in addition 4 years from 2021	RW on Environmental Steering Group, meet 1 day every couple of months
168/207	Tower	No land transfer or cash Habitat management plan	RW attends. Part of BC ENRAW. New consent for education centre. Possibly some remnant peat
175	14 th ave Hirwaun Ind estate National Grid substation	No land transfer or cash 25 yr habitat management plan agreed 21/5/14 National Grid lead restoration of ancient peat bog in South Wales National Grid Group	Peatbog etc. RW attends, part of BC ENRAW See also 236 below

196	The Ridings/ Dyffryn Bach	No land transfer or cash Nature reserve management plan, tree management plan,	Habitat Management Committee incl RW, Resident Assoc Management Co Relic peat on this site
231	Headwind windfarm	No land transfer or cash Habitat management plan including peat	not commenced
236	Hirwaun Ind Estate (Drax)	No land transfer or cash to Countryside Gas fired power station, area of land for bog reinstatement part of the bog in no. 175 above. £10k for amenity and landscape improvements to Regeneration Link to ENRAW grant funding for Hirwaun Ind Estate 2019/20	RW sits on the Regeneration working party board, Also part of BC ENRAW Peat on this site continuation of S106 175
237	Mynydd Portref extension	No land transfer or cash Habitat management plan Ecological Monitoring Report – Year 0 Baseline Establishment (2021) prepared by Avian Ecology following survey work in summer 2021, in accordance with the Habitat Management Plan (2015). Our client RES Group, who now operate the Wind Farm, are adopting the habitat establishment works and continued monitoring in accordance with the agreed HMP. (from RW 28/01/22)	Site includes peat RW on habitat management committee
242	Abergorki windfarm	No land transfer or cash Habitat management plan,	Includes peat not commenced
261	Penrhiw caradoc solar farm	No land transfer or cash Habitat management plan	Includes peat Operational,
300	Mynydd Bwlfa windfarm/ solar farm	No land transfer or cash Habitat management for 25 years	Includes peat

Sites with planning conditions

	Mynydd Bwlfa wind farm	Pennant Walters Hirwaun Ltd	Areas 1 and 3 are peatbog restorations
	Mynydd Portref windfarm	Tegni Cymru Cyf condition 19	Habitat management plan: peat restoration including Valley mire
	Berthllwyn solar farm	Elgin Energy EsCo Ltd 2015	Peat area to be restored Not yet implemented?

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