



**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  
2 Llys Cadwyn  
Taff Street  
Pontypridd  
CF37 4TH

Meeting Contact: Sarah Handy - Council Business Unit (07385401942)

**YOU ARE SUMMONED** to a virtual meeting of **CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE** to be held on **THURSDAY, 7TH MARCH, 2024** 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 Tuesday, 5 March 2024 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 Steering Group held on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

**3. CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE SITE VISITS**

To receive an overview from the Chair of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee in respect of the Living Landscapes site visits held on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

**4. PROCURED GOODS & SERVICES**

To provide Members with an update on the Council's compliance with the Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023.

11 - 16

**5. ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS**

To receive details on Key Energy Generation Projects and Related Issues.

17 - 24

**6. COSTED CARBON REDUCTION PLAN**

To receive a presentation on 'Counting the Cost of the Council's Decarbonisation Strategy'.

**7. SUSTAINABLE FOOD**

To provide information to Members on the work undertaken on developing RCT as a sustainable food place.

25 - 42

**8. SCHOOLS ECO AWARD**

To provide Members with an overview of progress in the launch and delivery of the RCT Schools Eco Award.

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**9. 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 W Owen

Officers:

Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Paul Mee, Chief Executive

Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development

Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources

Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services

David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates

Lesley Lawson, Performance Manager

Marc Crumby, Head of Procurement Delivery

Syd Dennis, Service Manager Community Development

Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Arts & Culture Manager

Andrea Richards, Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh

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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL  
CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Virtual meeting of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee held on Thursday, 21 December 2023 at 10.00 am.

This meeting was recorded, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

**County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:**

Councillor C Leyshon (Chair)

Councillor A Crimmings    Councillor R Lewis  
Councillor M Norris    Councillor W Owen

**Officers in attendance**

Mr P Mee, Chief Executive  
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates  
Ms L Lawson, Performance Manager  
Mr P Dukes, Principal Carbon Reduction Officer  
Mr A Roberts, Head of Energy & Carbon Reduction

**7 Declaration of Interest**

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

**8 Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023 as an accurate reflection.

**9 Matters Arising**

The Chair updated Members in respect of the two action points arising from the September meeting as follows:

1. A Site Visit; There will be a site visit held on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Details of the location will be provided closer to the time.
2. A meeting with the National Grid; The Director of Corporate Estates updated Members as follows:

The Director reported that a positive meeting with National Grid had taken place and that discussions had taken place around an Energy Network Association and a three point plan which is available on their website. The National grid confirmed that they are happy to work collaboratively with RCTCBC and to

continue the dialogue moving forward. As a distribution Service Operator (DSO) they have to put a private business plan together and that is very specific. The work they do on it is heavily regulated. The Director advised that with our local energy plan, National Grid have advised that the more that we can inform them about what our needs are, the more they can build that into their business plans and ask OFGEM for funding. National Grid confirmed that they want to work with us through the life of the Local Energy Plan. Furthermore, the Director noted that they have introduced a Connect ability Pledge, which says consumers have a right now to install EV Charging points in their home as well as standard heat pumps and they only have to notify the National Grid after they have installed it. Members were also told that National Grid are re designing their website and making it area based and RAG rated. They are also publishing a new EV Charging Strategy. The Director emphasised that it was a very positive meeting.

The Chair confirmed that it was a positive meeting and confirmed that they will also be invited to a future meeting of the Committee. A Member confirmed that they were pleased to hear this and looked forward to hearing more from them in the future. Members were pleased to hear that we have developed a good relationship with the distributor but would like reassurance that less affluent communities also get access to the network. The Chair agreed with the importance of monitoring this in the future.

## 10 **THINK CLIMATE RCT' THE COUNCIL'S TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2022-2025: QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Performance Manager presented the 'Think Climate RCT: The Council's Tackling Climate Change Strategy 2022-2025' Quarter 2 to Members.

The Chair welcomed the report and noted that it was very positive to see more about procurement. The Chair referenced the School Eco Awards and queried how many schools have applied to have their Bronze award. The Performance Manager confirmed that to date there are currently 19 schools already signed up. The Chair was pleased to hear this and emphasised the importance of involving our school children. The Vice Chair also praised this work and thanked the Officers for such a detailed report.

Discussions continued and praised the work behind the scenes. The Member referenced page 14 and queried if there had been any funding update on the phase two innovation project from Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The Member also welcomed the amount of people who are coming forward to obtain grants to improve their properties and commented that this was inspiring to see. The Performance Manager noted that further detail on the grants funding will be included in the Quarter three update after Christmas.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED**: :

1. To consider the information contained within the report;
2. To take a view on the potential areas for further consideration as part of the Sub Committee's Work Programme; and
3. To note the work to progress and further embed the Council's response to Climate Change into the business of the Council as part of the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan.

## 11 Carbon Footprint

The Principal Carbon Reduction Officer presented the report to Members and provided an update to the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee with regards to the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Reporting Scheme and Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's submission under that regime for the Financial Year 2022/23.

The Chair praised the report and noted how pleased she was to see that we keep 23% of our supply chain. The Chair welcomed questions from Members.

Discussions ensued and a Member referred to 5.8 and noted that we can't use some of the data to offset our carbon emissions. The Member queried why this was the case. The Principal Carbon Reduction Officer advised that the reporting mechanism was established by the Welsh Government and they feel that we already benefit from any new electricity that we generate so that using it to offset our carbon emissions would be a double benefit. There are discussions going on between Welsh Government and Scheme Participants to recognise a new way of marking the renewable energy that we generate. The Chair asked for any updates on this to be fed back to the Committee.

Discussions continued and a Member praised that there has been an overall reduction across the Board. The Member noted how much hard work has gone on in the background in respect of our supply chain and informing suppliers how to reduce their carbon footprint and in turn to reduce our own carbon footprint. The Member praised the Officers for this hard work. The Chair advised Members that she has met with individual staff and apprentices/graduates on the team and that they will be invited to a future meeting date and advised that she has personally thanked the team.

Another Member praised the report and noted that the service changes made by Cabinet over the years has shown that it can be joined up with decarbonisation.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED**:

1. To note the contents of this report as part of the ongoing work under the remit of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee;
2. To publish the data on the Council's Carbon Footprint Dashboard; and
3. To receive further reports providing additional updates on progress as / when deemed appropriate.

## 12 UPDATE REPORT ON THE PROPOSED SOLAR FARM

The Head of Energy Carbon Reduction presented his report to Members and provided 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.

Discussions ensued and a Member praised the report and noted how user friendly it was. The Member also congratulated Officer on getting the grant funding.

Following discussion, Members **AGREED:**

1. To 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. To receive further report(s) to provide updates on progress as/when deemed appropriate.

### **13 EV CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN COUNCIL ASSETS**

The Director of Corporate Estates and the Head of Carbon Reduction Officer presented the report to Members and provided an update on progress made in the field of Electric Vehicle Charging, within Council Assets, in working towards to the Council's publicly stated EV charging goals. The Director also provided Members with a Power Point presentation in respect of EV Charging points throughout the County Borough.

The Chair praised the amount of data in the report and noted that some EV Charging points are used very little and that data can help us with the roll out of EV Charging and knowing where to go with it.

Discussions ensued and a Member noted how good it was to see the amount of EV Charging coverage throughout RCT. The Member queried if EV Charging will be put in the Coed Ely Solar Farm once its up and running and also asked if we have mapping of third party providers. The Director of Corporate Estates acknowledged that there are gaps in Coed Ely but advised Members that the team are already working on this. The Director advised that there is a Zap Map available and that's a map all third party providers are on. You can also use the Zap map to check if the EV Charging points are functioning. RCT's data in respect of EV Charging is also uploaded to the Zap Map. Another Member queried if it would be possible in future meetings to have a breakdown of EV Charging and usage. The Head of Carbon Reduction confirmed that we have this data already and when it goes public we will have public data as well. With regards to the CCR Transport Authority, the Head of Carbon Reduction has confirmed that he has asked for data but that it has not been forthcoming as yet. The Chair advised that if this remains the case, we could write to them as a Committee asking for that data.

Following discussion, Members **AGREED:**

- To note the contents of this report, and an accompanying presentation, as part of the ongoing work in response to the Council's EV charging ambitions set by the Climate Change Strategy and the EV Charging Strategy and Implementation Plan; and
2. To receive further report(s) to provide updates on progress as/when deemed appropriate.

### **14 Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business to report.



**This meeting closed at 10.55 am**

**Councillor C Leyshon  
Chair.**

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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE

7<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024

#### THE COUNCIL'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS) (WALES) ACT 2023

#### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE & CORPORATE SERVICES (Cllr C. LEYSHON)

**Author: Marc Crumby – Head of Procurement**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Council's compliance with the Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Review the content of the report and be satisfied that the Council complies with the Act.
- 2.2 Note the Council's upcoming work to ensure compliance with future phases of the legislation.
- 2.3 Note the work that is progressing to reduce other single-use items that are not specifically listed within the Act.

#### **3. THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS) (WALES)**

- 3.1 The Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023 became law in Wales during 2023. The Act makes it a criminal offence to supply or offer to supply (including for free) certain single-use plastic products to consumers in Wales.
- 3.2 This law bans the sale or supply of certain single-use plastic products in Wales, unless an exemption applies (details of the exemptions are provided with the Statutory Guidance supporting the Act). Plastic straws can be used in a care home environment for example but cannot be used in other areas of the Council's business such as Theatres and Schools for example.

- 3.3 The ban will be introduced in ‘phases’ to allow businesses and organisations time to use existing stock and to buy or make alternative arrangements.
- 3.4 The first phase of the ban came into force on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023, and banned of the following items:
- Single-use plastic plates (including paper plates with a laminated plastic surface)
  - Single-use plastic cutlery
  - Single-use plastic drinks stirrers
  - Cups made of expanded or foamed extruded polystyrene
  - Takeaway food containers made of expanded or foamed extruded polystyrene
  - Single-use plastic balloon sticks
  - Single-use plastic-stemmed cotton buds
  - Single-use plastic drinking straws
- 3.5 The second phase of the ban is expected to come into force during the Spring of 2026. This will include a ban on the following items:
- Carrier bags – with exemptions including carrier bags for raw fish, meat or poultry and unpackaged food.
  - Polystyrene lids for cups and takeaway food containers.
  - Oxo-degradable plastic products.
- 3.6 Any organisation that does not comply with the Act will be committing a criminal offence and will be subject to a financial penalty.
- 4. THE COUNCIL’S COMPLIANCE WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS) (WALES)**
- 4.1 The Council has prepared well for these changes. Work in respect of reviewing and removing single use items has taken place for the past 3 years by the Council’s Procurement Service.
- 4.2 Members can be reassured of the following:
- All items listed within ‘Phase 1’ of the legislation were removed during 2020. Exceptions are in place such as plastic straws, but the criteria adheres to the Act.
- 4.3 Over and above those items listed in ‘Phase 1’ of the Act, the Council has endeavoured to remove as many single use items (not just plastic) from its services as possible. Table 1 provides a summary of those items removed from the electronic catalogues that service areas use, the Table also provides an indication of the previous number of items ordered, for context.

**Table 1**

<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Quantities previously ordered in a financial year:</b>
7oz Cold Water Cup	42,000
Std Plastic Knife	2,000
Std Plastic Fork	5,000
Std Plastic Stirrer	5,000
Food Box	1,800
4oz White plastic Dish	1,000
Oval salad Pack	3,000
Paper Plate	8,000
Trifle Dish White	3,000
Single Use Cups	6,500
Wooden Stirrers	2,000

- 4.4 Those items listed in paragraph 3.5 (Phase 2 of the Act) have also been taken out of circulation, where relevant.
- 4.5 As a result of this work being carried out, the Council was well prepared and will not be impacted by the introduction of the ban on these products. Over and above the requirements of the Act, Section 5 of this report provides examples of work that is taking place across the Council to make it more sustainable.

## **5. ADDITIONAL PROGRESS ON REDUCING ALL SINGLE-USE PRODUCTS**

### School Catering

- 5.1 The Council's Catering Service has been keen to review the use of single use items. Table 2 provides a summary of the current pilots that have taken place, a further rollout is planned once the lessons learned from these pilots have been reviewed. The use of water fountains and reusable bottles is also being encouraged.

Table 2

<b><u>Piloting of Plates &amp; Cutlery - 2023/24</u></b>	
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	Pilot complete. Re-usable plates and cutlery in place.
Ysgol Rhydywaun	Pilot complete. Re-usable plates and cutlery in place.
YG Cwm Rhondda	Pilot complete. Re-usable plates and cutlery in place.
Ysgol Nantgwyn	Pilot complete. Re-usable plates and cutlery in place.
Y Pant	Pilot complete. Re-usable plates and cutlery in place.
Ysgol Afon Wen (Hawthorn High)	Piloting underway. Review to take place in the financial year.

Ysgol Garth Olwg	Piloting underway. Review to take place in the financial year.
St John Baptist CIW	Piloting underway. Review to take place in the financial year.
Porth Community School	Piloting underway. Review to take place in the financial year.
Aberdare Community School	Piloting underway. Review to take place in the financial year.
Mountain Ash Comprehensive	Piloting underway. Review to take place in the financial year.
Cardinal Newman	Piloting underway. Review to take place in the financial year.
Ferndale Community School	Piloting underway. Review to take place in the financial year.
Ysgol Bro Taf (Ponty High)	Piloting underway. Review to take place in the financial year.

#### Facilities Cleaning

- 5.2 The Facilities Cleaning Service has trialled the use of disposable pods, as an alternative to the 750ml single-use plastic cleaning bottles. Products were diluted into trigger spray bottles and tested by the mobile cleaning team. The trial is now complete with the products effectiveness as recorded. The outcome from this work will now be used to inform the upcoming janitorial supplies contract.

### **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 There are no consultation requirements emanating from the recommendations set out in the report.

### **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommendations made within this report.

### **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

10.1 Under The Environmental Protection (Single-Use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023, Welsh Ministers also have powers to add or remove products from the list of banned single-use plastic products.

10.2 The Council will need to monitor any Welsh Government changes to the list of banned single-use plastic products and ensure ongoing compliance.

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

11.1 This report sets out the Council's compliance with the new Environmental Protection (Single-Use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act, in respect of the ban on certain single-use plastic products. It also highlights the wider work that is being undertaken to reduce the use of single-use items further. Our compliance and additional work supports the Council's ambitions to be environmentally responsible, helping contribute towards the Council's 'Making a Difference: Corporate Plan', specifically 'Section 4 – Places' by aiming to reduce the use of plastic products.

11.2 Additionally, this supports the Well-being of Future Generations Act by contributing to the goal – 'A Globally Responsible Wales'.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

12.1 The Environmental Protection (Single-Use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act came into effect on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

12.2 The new law makes it a criminal offence to supply specific single-use plastic products to consumers in Wales.

12.3 Due to work undertaken prior to the Act coming into effect, the Council was well prepared and will not be impacted by the introduction of the ban on these products.

12.4 In addition to its compliance with the new legislation, the Council is aiming to further reduce the use of 'other' single-use items. This is over and above the items listed within the Act.



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP**

**7<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2023**

**THE COUNCIL'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
(SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS) (WALES) ACT 2023**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN CONSULTATION  
WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE & CORPORATE  
SERVICES (Cllr C. LEYSHON)**

**Author: Marc Crumbie – Head of Procurement**





## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE

07 March 2024

#### UPDATE REPORT ON KEY ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS AND RELATED ISSUES

#### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE ESTATES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND CORPORATE SERVICES, COUNCILLOR C. LEYSHON

**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 the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee with details of 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 Agree to receiving further reports during 2024 and 2025, 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, hydroelectric 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. RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS**

##### **5.1 Solar Farm Installation**

As reported previously, the Council continues to make significant progress in the development of a 6MW Land Based Solar Farm, to be located on Council owned land at Coed Ely. The facility will, when constructed, be an asset owned and operated by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. The project has the potential to 'offset' over 1,100 tonnes of carbon per-annum and around 47,000 tonnes over the expected 40yr lifecycle of the project (*subject to final detailed design*). This will take the Council's portfolio of renewable energy potential, from Solar alone, to over 8MWp.

The project is due to be presented to Council in March for funding approval and subject to this, a contractor will be appointed in Spring 2024. The appointment will consist of a Design, Build, Operate and Maintain contract.

##### **5.2 Hydro Electricity Prospects**

The Council continues to make progress with the development of a 50kW high-head hydroelectric scheme at Dare Valley Country Park. The project proposes to provide a direct private wire connection to the hotel complex, on site, which will provide approximately 80% of its electricity needs. A preliminary design has been completed and relevant site study work is currently being undertaken, to support a planning application later in 2024. This project, if realised, will have the potential to offset 41 tonnes of Carbon per annum and directly decarbonise the hotel facility.

Officers are currently working with specialist consultants to review the feasibility of a 300kW low-head hydroelectric scheme at Treforest Weir. This scheme has the potential to offset over 270 tonnes of Carbon per-annum. Options are being explored to evaluate how best to utilise this electricity within the local area to decarbonise Council assets. The initial feasibility assessment appears favourable and survey work is now

underway to inform a design that will allow the team to progress submitting a planning application for the scheme, subject to further approval.

The Team have also now identified and undertaken assessments on a series of potential opportunities for Hydro Electric generation within the boundaries of the wider County Borough. A wider ranking report was commissioned on over 30 potential sites and further feasibility work is now being undertaken to assess the potential of 6 of these prospective schemes, all of which are based on the principle of high-head generation, with a view to directly decarbonising Council assets. These schemes will be presented to members in future reports once their assessments are fully concluded, and as appropriate.

### 5.3 **Other Solar & Wind Power Aspirations**

The lack of spare grid capacity at the National Grid (NG) 'Upper Boat' distribution hub continues to prove a barrier to progress, prior to completion of major infrastructure investment works, planned in the area over the next 5yrs. Prior to this juncture, the likelihood of obtaining any scalable grid connections, above 999kW, remains highly unlikely.

Notwithstanding the above, the Council was previously successful in obtaining two grid connections from NG in pursuit of its aspirations to generate renewable energy, the first option for 4.2MW at 11kV and a second for 6MW at 33kV. Discussions have been underway, for some time, with several developers who have plans to construct wind turbines on land adjoining to that owned by the Council.

Following negotiations, the 4.2MW grid connection offer was novated to a 'national' developer to enable them to realise the full potential of their adjacent site. The Council will be given the opportunity to invest further in the project when construction starts, and the agreement arrived at with the developer recovered all our initial investment and also secured substantial community benefits, moving forward, including the potential for a small future stake in the facility irrespective of the outcome of any future talks. Discussions with the developer have been ongoing, periodically, and we have been advised that they have now secured investment to enable the project to proceed, although some major challenges with the access route remain.

At a different location, initial success in securing a 6MW grid connection offer from National Grid (*NGED*) resulted in discussions taking place with a 'local' developer, that already had plans to create a far larger windfarm on an immediately adjacent site. Dialogue has been ongoing to explore our options for collaborative working and how it could benefit both parties. Subsequently, a feasibility study was commissioned, following discussions with both the adjacent developer and the Council's Tips Team, to determine the suitability of the site. It should be noted that the findings of the report limit what can be developed at the site. Also *NGED* have applied a significant increase in their latest estimate, which is a periodic revision to the original grid offer. Both of these factors now mean

that the potential viability of the project will now need to be quickly reassessed, in light of the latest information, before moving forward.

Discussions have previously been held with a third 'local' 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 creation a mini network to distribute electricity to identified sites connecting effectively "behind the meter", from a central distribution point. Discussions relating to this subject have now been paused to await the findings of a working group set up by the Welsh Government Energy Service (*on which we are represented*), the findings of which will help determine any potential, future carbon benefits from undertaking such a project.

Feasibility studies are being undertaken at some of our brown field sites, to determine their suitability for use as future land based Solar Farms. These initiatives are on a smaller scale than the project at Coed-Ely, and given the lack of grid connection opportunities, the purpose of these potential projects would be to help decarbonise adjacent Council assets, behind the meter wherever practicable.

## **6. UPDATE ON OTHER RELATED AREAS OF WORK**

### **6.1 Carbon Reduction Programme**

The 2023/24 programme is now in the final quarter of delivery. The works include a wide range of proposals including such schemes as Solar PV, LED Lighting, BMS Controls and Boiler Upgrades, etc. The programme for 2023/24 is valued at around £2M and will result in annual carbon savings of 558 tonnes (CO<sub>2</sub>e). When this figure is added to savings from previous years (*dating back to fy'2009/10*), the equivalent CO<sub>2</sub>e annual savings, resulting from this programme, are now in the region of 6,442 tonnes per annum.

### **6.2 Geo-Thermal Technology**

The ground-breaking 'geo-thermal heating' project, involving Taff's Well Thermal Spring, is now complete with the addition of the new school extension. The completion of this project, together with the refurbishment of the nearby park pavilion, means that the full extent of the heat network project is now in operation. The estimated annual carbon saving of this project being around 17tonnes (CO<sub>2</sub>e).

The lessons learned during this project will act as 'stepping-stones' to potentially develop other future heat recovery networks, involving 'mine water', at targeted locations within the County Borough, or in potential partnerships with adjacent authorities. Discussions with the Coal Authority (CA) have now restarted to assess potential 'pilot' projects within RCT. One feasibility study/report has already been received for an ambitious initiative at Rhondda Heritage Park and Welsh Gov't have recently approved stage 2 grant funding, direct to the CA, in order to

facilitate further research into the proposals. If deemed viable, the project may also have the potential to help heat/decarbonise a nearby school.

### 6.3 **Amgen Developments**

The 1.5MW wind turbine project at Nant-y-Gwyddon was installed, by Infinite Renewables, during 2023 and is now well into its first yearly cycle of generation, having been fully operational since last September.

The 300kW land based solar PV development, proposed at the Bryn Pica site, has overcome some issues with grid export constraints, and Officers are now looking to take the scheme to the Amgen board for approval in March 2024. If realised the project will be used to help decarbonise waste and recycling operations at the site.

### 6.4 **Local Area Energy Plan (or LAEP)**

In early 2023, funded by Welsh Government, the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) commissioned a team of specialists to prepare Local Area Energy Plans for each Local Authority in the region. The ambition of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Area Energy Plan (or LAEP) is to establish a comprehensive framework that enables the council, in collaboration with partners and stakeholders, to achieve a zero-carbon local energy system by 2050 for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Rhondda Cynon Taf LAEP has been methodically developed through a series of strategic workshops, facilitated by our Officers. These workshops were instrumental in identifying and prioritizing six critical intervention areas: Retrofit Whole Buildings, Decarbonise Transport, Deploy Onshore Renewables, Foster Innovation, Reinforce Electricity Distribution Network, and Transition of the Gas Network.

The development of the LAEP forms a part of a region-wide initiative, with all LAEPs across the Cardiff Capital Region anticipated to be fully developed by end of March 2024, ready for approval and adoption into the future development plans of all Councils, and the LAEP will be the subject of a separate report later in 2024. The LAEP represents a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to energy planning in the wider County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf, and its intention is that it will be underpinned by community engagement, evidence-based decision-making, and a commitment to sustainable development.

## 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 It should be noted that the cost of borrowing has now risen above the level used in all previous financial models used in various project assessments. Also, 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 is now necessary, and on a more frequent basis.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

11.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this update report.

## **12. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.**

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

12.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act asks public bodies to work better with people, communities, and each other, to meet the Sustainable Development principle. The Council's approach to the implementation of the Act agreed by Cabinet is to make sure that its requirements are embedded into the everyday business.

- A Healthier Wales
- A More Equal Wales
- A Resilient Wales
- A Cohesive Wales
- A Vibrant Wales
- A Prosperous Wales
- A Globally Responsible Wales

12.3 The purpose of the report is to provide an interim update and highlight any future actions that may arise as a result of the recommendations of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee, and any actions resulting from the report will pay full regard to the seven national wellbeing goals.

## **13. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 The intent of this report is in furthering the ambitions for the Council's Climate Change Agenda.

13.2 This report is for the purpose of update only, however if the potential as described herein is realised, the outcomes will make a positive contribution towards tackling climate change and help decarbonise the Council's Estate and/or Activities.

## **14. CONCLUSION**

- 14.1 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 projects that will make a significant contribution to the Council achieving its Carbon targets. It also provides key updates on other keynote associated workstreams and plans to reduce the Council's Carbon impact.

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

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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE

7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024

#### SUSTAINABLE FOOD PLACES: UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE RCT FOOD PARTNERSHIP IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

#### REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR BOB HARRIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

Author(s): Dean Emson, (Syd Dennis and Caroline O'Neill)

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with information on the work undertaken since 2020 in relation to Sustainable Food Places and the planned programme of work for 2024-25.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members consider the progress reported, the planned expenditure, and how this contributes to the broader objectives of the Councils Tackling Climate Change Strategy 2022-2025: [‘Think Climate RCT’](#)

#### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To inform and update the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee in relation to the significant body of work that has been undertaken to achieve recognition for Rhondda Cynon Taf as a Sustainable Food Place.
- 3.2 To highlight the contribution being made by the Council’s Community Development Team and its designated Sustainable Food Co-ordinator; community partners across Rhondda Cynon Taf; and the impact of this work on the Council’s climate change ambitions.

#### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 *Storm Dennis*

- 4.1.1 The Council's first initial involvement in relation to providing direct food support to residents took place in 2020 in response to Storm Dennis, when the Council issued a press release requesting public donations, volunteer time and food (see Appendix A).
- 4.1.2 The press release received an unexpected response, with all major supermarkets making significant donations and residents keen to help.
- 4.1.3 The Community Development Team implemented a plan for the collection and re-distribution of food, and other items, to individuals and families affected by Storm Dennis. In total, 461 food parcels were delivered.
- 4.2 *Coronavirus Pandemic*
  - 4.2.1 As a direct response to the unprecedented development of Covid 19, the Community Development Team co-ordinated the Council's second major foray into food support.
  - 4.2.2 When the National Lockdown arrangements were announced on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, food was an immediate issue of concern for residents and food providers, with panic buying resulting in significant shortages of key items.
  - 4.2.3 The Council established a Food Distribution Centre and co-ordinated a distribution network utilising the [Community Resilience Hubs](#).
  - 4.2.4 The Food Distribution Centre delivered a total of 2535 food parcels; an additional 810 frozen meals were delivered to residents on the Shielded Patient list who were unable to prepare food for themselves; and co-ordinated the distribution of 2512 food parcels on behalf of Welsh Government.
- 4.3 Storm Dennis, the Coronavirus Pandemic, the uncertainties of Brexit, and the subsequent cost of living impacts have highlighted the importance of developing a medium to long-term solution to food sustainability across Rhondda Cynon Taf; particularly as many of the initiatives implemented were short term solutions to unprecedented situations.
- 4.4 On 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020, the then Service Director for Community Services met with key partners involved in local food networks and collaborations that had emerged since Storm Dennis, and recognised that there was a clear intent, commitment, and agreement to develop a strategic response to food poverty (including the establishment of a Food Prosperity Network and a Food Response Pathway that had been

successful in some other areas) that would provide a sustainable way forward.

- 4.5 In October 2020, the Leader of the Council announced £10,000 of funding for foodbanks; however, local intelligence and discussions indicated that several micro/community groups, that had established local responses to needs during Covid-19 and were providing food support across RCT, were in more immediate need of support to make a significant contribution to the effort of ensuring RCT residents had sufficient food.
- 4.6 It was agreed that the £10,000 be utilised to establish a small grant scheme to support these smaller ventures, and in November 2020 the Council's Community Development Team launched the RCTCBC Food Support Fund, available to community groups, with Trivallis also contributing £10,000 increasing the grant available to £20,000.
- 4.7 In November 2020, the Senior Leadership Team of the Council agreed to work collaboratively with relevant partners to develop a more strategic approach to food poverty and establish an RCT Food Prosperity Network and a Food Response Pathway, which would seek to secure a more sustainable way ahead
- 4.8 The [Sustainable Food Places UK](#) approach was identified by officers as the exemplar model for creating a 'Food Prosperity Network'.

## **5. Sustainable Food Places**

- 5.1 Sustainable Food Places focuses on six key issues:

**Key Issue 1:** Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action.

**Key Issue 2:** Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement.

**Key Issue 3:** Tackling food poverty and diet related ill-health and increasing access to affordable healthy food.

**Key Issue 4:** Creating a vibrant, prosperous, and diverse sustainable food economy.

**Key Issue 5:** Transforming catering and procurement and revitalising local and sustainable food supply chains.

**Key Issue 6:** Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food & farming and an end to food waste.

5.2 In December 2020, the Council applied to Sustainable Food Places for a £5,000 Development Grant to initiate the strategic approach to food and in January 2021 the Council was chosen as one of just four successful applicants from Wales.

5.3 Following on from the work undertaken with the Development Grant, successful Sustainable Food Places applications were submitted and awarded in October 2021 for Sustainable Food Places Membership and a contribution towards the salary of a Sustainable Food Coordinator.

## 6. **Sustainable Food Places: Progress and Milestones**

6.1 The secured Development Grant was utilised to:

- Gain a better understanding of the current Food System and current projects across the county;
- Instigate a Sustainable Food Network, including gaining buy-in, ownership and support from the public, private and voluntary sectors;
- Develop an action plan to take the Good Food Movement forward.

6.2 The six-month Development Grant period culminated in an event on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021, facilitated by Interlink RCT, attended by 82 individuals from organisations involved and interested in being part of Sustainable Food Places in RCT.

6.4 In moving forward, successful applications were submitted to Sustainable Food Places in October 2021 for Sustainable Food Places Membership and a contribution towards the salary costs for a Sustainable Food Coordinator, providing RCT access to a framework, peer support, funding and networks to develop Sustainable Food Places in RCT.

6.4 In November 2021, a Sustainable Food Coordinator was appointed, funded by Sustainable Food Places and the WLGA EU Transitional Fund; and thereafter, the UKG Shared Prosperity Fund.

6.5 The work is guided by an **RCT Food Steering Group**, which has a Terms of Reference and meets bimonthly.

6.6 The Steering Group includes seven core members representing RCTCBC, Interlink RCT, Bryncynon Strategy, FareShare Cymru, Cwm

Taf Morgannwg University Health Board Public Health Team, Grow Rhondda and Welcome to Our Woods.

- 6.7 Focus has been on increasing membership of the Sustainable Food Partnership, which currently includes 111 individuals across 98 organisations, and following input and suggestions from partners, the Sustainable Food Partnership in RCT has been named '**RCT Food**'.
- 6.8 RCT Food has two active sub-groups which meet quarterly to facilitate connections and collaborations between a broad range of food factors: the **Community Growers Sub-group** and the **Food Pantry Sub-group**.

## 7. **Sustainable Food Places: Impact and Outcomes**

- 7.1 The Sustainable Food Coordinator has been instrumental in ensuring that food-related projects have accessed grants support and advice, including grants secured from Trivallis, WLGA Direct Food Support, WLGA Sustainable Food Partnerships, Sustainable Food Places Coordinator Grant, and Sustainable Food Places Food for Planet (see Appendix B).
- 7.2 Of the projects funded by the Food Support Fund, a conservative minimum report of 3,215 individuals and 274 volunteers benefited from the 35 projects funded in 2022/23.
- 7.3 The 2022/23 Winter Hardship Fund's returned monitoring and evaluation forms from 50 organisations reported 2,824 adults supported and 617 children supported during the 1,309 sessions provided, with 2,980 individuals receiving a warm drink/snack; 1,816 receiving warm pack items; and 315 volunteers involved in delivery.
- 7.5 For the eight food-related projects funded by the UKG Shared Prosperity Fund during 2022/23, 1,322 improved engagement numbers were reported.
- 7.6 Across all the food related grants distributed in 2023/24 (UKG Shared Prosperity Fund Community Grant, UKG Shared Prosperity Fund Community Micro Food Grant, Food Support Fund, Winter Hardship Fund and direct support to foodbanks) it is expected that there will be a significant increase in beneficiaries once monitoring is received and verified.

- 7.7 Direct monetary support is also available for residents in need to purchase food through a £35 Blackhawk vouchers which can be redeemed as a gift card to be used at any major supermarket, and 198 vouchers have been supplied to residents in RCT during 2022-23 to access emergency food.
- 7.8 In RCT, the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers to provide support with nutritional intake amongst children and families on low incomes has increased from 56% in June 2022 to 78% as at December 2023 (the Wales average is 71%), and information provided to all community food support projects, with awareness campaigns run in low take-up areas such as Taf Ely.
- 7.9 Since May 2022, nine Community Growers and Pantry sub-group events have been held to inspire and engage the public about good food at various locations across the borough, including Meadow Street Community Garden, Cynon Valley Organic Adventures and Welcome to Our Woods.
- 7.10 A successful Community Asset Transfer was achieved with Welcome to Our Woods, who now have a lease agreement with the Council for land in Treherbert at which they plan to explore a community agroforestry project; a food hub was also launched in 2022 with funding the organisation secured from the Open Food Network.
- 7.11 With the Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB area recording the highest level of obesity in Wales, and RCT being the second highest, the RCT Food members have delivered events in partnership with the Public Health Team, such as Get Cooking and Nutrition Skills for Life Courses across RCT.
- 7.12 The Council has committed in its [Climate Change Strategy](#) to work “with local businesses to help them source more sustainable products locally and sell to local markets”, including agricultural businesses, and RCT Food, in conjunction with Cywain, has hosted three business breakfast events at Mallow Beverages with 9 businesses present during 2023.
- 7.13 The majority of our food suppliers used in the production of School and Community Meals for the Council are based in south Wales and RCT are working in collaboration with neighbouring local authorities, and is a member of the WLGA Food Group, to centrally look at procurement

routes to market that will benefit local Welsh supply chains and the foundational economy of Wales.

- 7.14 In Rhondda Cynon Taf food pantries and zero waste shops represent a bold step towards placing good food enterprise at the core of local economic development, offering sustainable shopping options and fostering a vibrant economic ecosystem that revolves around community needs and values, for example Down to Zeros vegetable boxes and Cynon Valley's Food Pantries Consortium's exploring their buying power to maximise the benefit to the local economy.

## **8. Achievement of Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award**

- 8.1 The RCT Food partnership was awarded the Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023, the joint-third (alongside Carmarthenshire County Council) Welsh Local Authority to receive this award since the framework was initiated in 2015 (Cardiff 2014, Vale of Glamorgan 2021).
- 8.2 Cabinet office released a [statement](#) celebrating this success on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023, and the RCT Food Partnership held a celebration event on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at Bryncynon Community Revival Strategy.
- 8.3 Constructive feedback following achievement of the Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award included the need to continue and build upon success to date, with developing work with procurement, healthy eating initiatives, and proactively promoting and supporting local producers identified as areas for improvement.

## **9. Working towards Sustainable Food Places Silver Award**

- 9.1 RCT Food Partnership's next development phase will concentrate effort towards achieving the Silver Award (Cardiff City Council is the only Silver award holder in Wales), with the intention to devise a strategy to support future developments longer term.
- 9.2 To achieve the Silver Award, a 3-year RCT strategy for Sustainable Food Places is required, which will be co-produced with RCT Food partners supported by the Council's Community Development Team.
- 9.3 In its development, the following will be actioned:
- A series of public participation events will also be delivered, such as Food Waste Action Week linked activities planned across the county hosted by network members;

- Engagement with Public Health Wales and Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB to create and deliver activities around a healthy sustainable diet and diet-related ill health across the county, including devising appropriate analysis to demonstrate positive social impact;
- Local sustainable food enterprises and private food businesses will be engaged in food sustainability discussions;
- Work with the Council's Procurement department to understand the current procurement policies regarding sustainability and short supply chains, and seek to inform and develop relevant new policies;
- Raise awareness of the detrimental effect of food waste and food supply chains on the environment and engage with key climate action stakeholders to ensure that food plays a central role in environmental conversations.

**10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

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

**11. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

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

**12. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

12.1 There are no consultation implications as a direct result of this report; however, it should be noted that developments to date and those in future, rely upon significant involvement from all key partners and agencies.

**13. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

13.1 The costs associated with this work can be met from the allocated grant funding from WLGA Direct Food Support and the UK Governments Shared Prosperity Fund. The funding for the Sustainable Food Co-ordinator post ceases in March 2025 placing developments at risk.

**14. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

14.1 There are no legal implications aligned to the recommendations in this report.

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



- 15.1 Sustainable Food Places has been included in the [RCT Climate Change Strategy: Think Climate](#), outlining a commitment to work to “foster a diverse and vibrant food economy”. The Council has also committed to work “with local businesses to help them source more sustainable products locally and sell to local markets.”
- 15.2 Sustainable Food Places specifically contributes to three of the four well-being objectives within the Council’s new Corporate Plan ‘Working With Our Communities’:

**PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES** - *Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.*

- Sustainable Food Places increases access to healthy, affordable and sustainable food, and empowers residents with education and training, such as cooking skills and nutrition.

**WORK AND BUSINESS** - *Helping to strengthen and grow RCT’s economy.*

- Sustainable Food Places celebrates and advocates for local producers and sustainable food enterprises.

**NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT** - *A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT’s environment and nature.*

- Sustainable Food Places supports residents and communities to grow their own food and raises awareness of the current food system’s impact upon the climate.

- 15.3 Sustainable Food Places reflects the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, with sustainable management based on long-term considerations and focus on preventative and precautionary action, contributing specifically to the Resilience and Global Responsibility Goals of the Act.

**16. CONCLUSION**

- 16.1 As Sustainable Food Places continues to develop in RCT and moves towards Sustainable Food Places Silver and Gold awards, the Community Development Team will continue to work in meaningful partnership with support from the Council.
- 16.2 The partnership work to date has received the recognition of other local authorities across Wales, and those from further afield in the UK, as some partnerships fail to thrive due to a lack of understanding and support from Councils.

16.3 The Sustainable Food Places programme is funded until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, with considerations being discussed to secure its future beyond this date.

# Community Response to Flooding and Volunteer Support



**NB: The actual press release is no longer available on RCTCBC website. This document includes what was published at the time.**

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is working in partnership with Interlink, Community Groups and our Communities to coordinate a community response to flooding and ensure we get the right help to the right locations as soon as we can.

The unprecedented weather events of this week have been devastating to communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf, which have responded with real community spirit and enormous resilience.

Our Communities are telling us that they need...

## **Volunteers:**

**To be in our designated collection points sort items** – we will be publishing these soon.

# Community Response to Flooding and Volunteer Support

**To help with the manual clean-up operation** – we need help from individuals and organisations.

**To help individuals manage the impact on their homes** – To help people move and sort out their homes.

**Skilled trade** - To re-instate the infrastructures and secure homes.

**Drivers** - To make sure the effort required to distribute items is available, reaches the communities most in need, and to respond to individual need. Specialist vehicles would also assist.

**Mini-bus drivers** – to help people get to Wi-Fi and sources of help and support – such as Foodbanks and Libraries.

**Donations:**

## **Materials and Equipment**

Cleaning Equipment such as Hard Brushes

Cleaning Materials

Dehumidifiers

Food

Clothing

Towels and bedding

# Community Response to Flooding and Volunteer Support

Animal products and food

The list above is not exhaustive so please do let us know any other offers you can make that might be needed either immediately, or in the future.

If you want to help in anyway at all, please contact Katie, who is waiting to take your call, with help from our colleagues in the Business Support Unit using the following:

**RCT Together**

**Email - [rcttogether@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:rcttogether@rctcbc.gov.uk)**

**Telephone - 01443 425368**

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## **Appendix B**

Examples of Food Provision and Grant Funded Projects across RCT

\*Grants are managed by the RCTCBC Community Development Team

<b><u>2022-23</u></b>	<b><u>2023-24</u></b>
<p><b><u>Food Banks</u></b></p> <p>During 2022-23, the four main Trussell Trust Foodbanks were awarded £12,500 each. The Councils Procurement team also supported to bulk order items of scarcity.</p>	<p><b><u>Food Banks</u></b></p> <p>During 2023-24, Foodbanks have received £10,000 each as a direct award.</p>
<p><b><u>WLGA Food Support Fund</u></b></p> <p>The <b>Food Support Fund</b> has awarded grants between £500-£1500 to Food Projects, with 35 Projects funded during 2022-23.</p> <p>EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS:</p> <p><u>Little Lounge</u></p> <p>Little Lounge run a Community Pantry in Cilfynydd every Friday morning. The scheme enables residents to pay a suggested donation of £2 to select a large bag of food produce which would otherwise go to waste. The scheme is in partnership with FareShare Go and Tesco Upper Boat.</p> <p><u>Fernhill &amp; Glenboi Community Centre</u></p> <p>Throughout the 6-week summer holidays, Fernhill &amp; Glenboi Community Centre provided free meals each day for the children in the community and subsidised meals at £1.00 for the adults.</p> <p><u>Combined Beneficiaries</u></p> <p>The combined responses from projects funded by the Food Support Fund provide a conservative minimum report of:</p>	<p><b><u>WLGA Food Support Fund</u></b></p> <p>20 Food Support Fund applications have been processed during 2023-24 with outcomes due to be verified in April 2024.</p>

<p><u>Number of beneficiaries – minimum of <b>3,215 individuals</b></u></p> <p><u>Number of Volunteers – minimum of <b>274 individuals</b></u></p>	
<p><b><u>RCTCBC Winter Hardship Fund</u></b></p> <p>The <b>Winter Hardship Fund</b> is available to support Winter Welcome Centres across RCT. Each Winter Welcome Centre provides a package of support which, as a minimum, includes: open access to a safe, warm space; hot food and drinks; warm packs for residents to take home; and a place to charge mobile devices.</p> <p><u>Combined beneficiaries (2022-23)</u></p> <p>Number of individual <b>adults</b> supported – <b>2,824</b></p> <p>Number of individual <b>children</b> supported – <b>617</b></p> <p>Number of Winter Welcome <b>sessions</b> provided – <b>1,309</b></p> <p>Number of individuals receiving <b>warm food/drink</b> – <b>2,980</b></p> <p>Number of <b>volunteers</b> involved in delivery – <b>315</b></p>	<p><b><u>RCTCBC Winter Hardship Fund</u></b></p> <p>The Winter Hardship Fund 2023-24 has reopened supporting 73 community venues, 58 of which have received funding to reopen from November 2023.</p>
<p><b><u>UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund</u></b></p> <p>The UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund has been made available to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) to enable places to invest in capacity building and infrastructure support to restore community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for social, environmental, economic &amp; cultural development at the neighbourhood-level.</p>	<p><b><u>UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund</u></b></p> <p>Approved awards 2023-24 specifically contributing to Sustainable Food Places:</p> <p>Growing Space Pontypridd - £13,610</p> <p>Tir Pontypridd - £1,000</p> <p>Taff Ely Foodbank - £14,999</p> <p>Fernhill and Glenboi over 60's - £4,241.82</p>



<p>Through work undertaken with RCT Food, significant Community Grant funding has been awarded to community organisations that directly contributes to Sustainable Food Places in RCT.</p> <p>Approved awards 2022-23 specifically contributing to Sustainable Food Places:</p> <p>Y Siop Fach CIC - £5,517  Cynon Valley Organic Adventures - £10,500  Growing Space Pontypridd CIC - £7,300  Little Lounge - £14,466  Arts Factory - £14,526.93  Grow Rhondda - £14,999  Darren Las Community Building - £4,183.50  Fernhill Community Centre - £1,508</p>	<p>Bryncynon Community Revival Strategy - £38,520.20</p> <p>Dig4health - £7,287.94</p> <p>Llanharan Community Development Project - £26,755.44</p> <p>Penderyn Community Centre - £32,757</p> <p>Pentre Comrades Club Ltd - £23,780.87</p>
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The UKG SPF RCTCBC Community Grant reopened in January 2024, for application for 2024-25 delivery. A high proportion of food-related projects have been submitted and are currently being assessed.

**Approved awards 2024-25 specifically contributing to Sustainable Food Places:**

Pentre Comrades Club Ltd - £14,872.43

Bryncynon Community Revival Strategy - £48,059.96

Little Lounge - £25,000

**Big Bocs Bwyd**

Funding and support has been provided to ten [Big Bocs Bwyd's](#) located within RCT Schools. This includes Pay As You Feel Shops with a small raised bed for the children to start growing. Tonyrefail Community School, through its Yr Efail CIC, has developed a pay as you feel zero waste shop which operates from two locations in Tonyrefail. They have also taken on the lease of a shop on the High Street in Tonyrefail to develop a community café and space.

**Gilfach Goch Community Facility**

A project was delivered at Glifach Goch Community Facility in relation to the procurement of local and climate-friendly food. The project focused on

looking at the protein content of the menu and, whilst largely maintaining the level of protein in dishes, reducing the overall amount of animal protein in the menu's items. The trial of a new recipe for Shepherds Pie, which reduced the meat content by 50% but maintained the protein content with lentils, was so successful it is now a permanent addition on the menu.

**Food Pantries**

Pantries, there are 13 in RCT (including a consortia in the Cynon valley), are different to foodbanks in that they are generally laid out like shops, and members pay a small contribution to choose their own items from a wide selection, including fresh, refrigerated, frozen, as well as long-life food.

**Food for the Planet Campaign**

£5,000 has been secured from Sustainable Food Places to run a Food for the Planet Campaign, building community conversations around more sustainable food. An international recipe book is being used by groups in RCT to produce their own community cookbook and start the conversation and transition to better food by meeting people where they currently are.



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE**

**7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024**

#### **RCT SCHOOLS ECO AWARD 2023-2024**

AUTHOR: Andrea Richards, Service Director, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Transformation

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide Members with an overview of progress in the launch and delivery of the RCT Schools Eco Award (Bronze Award), where participating schools are positively contributing to the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet Sub Committee:

- 2.1 Considers the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Note any considerations that could be implemented in the Silver Award which will be launched at the beginning of the next academic year (2024/2025).

#### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To assist the Council in meeting its 2030 Carbon Neutral targets.

For RCT to be a carbon neutral Council, for the whole County Brough to be as close as possible to carbon neutral and to contribute to the Welsh Government's ambition of a Net Zero public sector.

- 3.2 To support the delivery of the Council's wider Tackling Climate Change Strategy.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 As part of the Education Service's contribution to reducing carbon/energy use across its school portfolio, an eco-award was developed for all schools in RCT. The award's

purpose was to increase engagement in climate and ecology issues within our schools, in line with our delivery plan.

4.2 The RCT Schools' Eco Award focuses on three key themes:

- Biodiversity and Nature,
- Waste and Recycling, and
- Energy and Carbon Saving.

4.3 All aspects of the award criteria must be met to achieve the RCT Schools Eco Award, bronze level. Examples of some things included in the award criteria are.

- Class projects on biodiversity and eco-systems, the impact of waste and recycling on the environment, and the contributors of increased carbon levels and their impact on the climate.
- Appointing School Biodiversity Champions and Junior Pollinators.
- Participation in the Council's Christmas Card and Easter Egg Box recycling competitions.
- Setting a target for a reduction in school waste and achieving it.
- Reduce the school's electric consumption by 5% and reduce the school's gas consumption by 5%.
- Introduce at least 1 initiative to mitigate the carbon output of the school.

4.4 The bronze level of the award was launched on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 at Ysgol Bro Taf, with Councillor Lewis (Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language) and Councillor Leyshon (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services) in attendance. Current pupils of Ysgol Bro Taf and Cilfynydd Primary School discussed their concerns regarding climate change and biodiversity with those present and explained projects already underway at the schools to enhance biodiversity at their school sites and contribute positively towards climate change. The pupils and school staff also discussed how the themes of biodiversity and climate change feed into the school curriculum. Morgan Sindall Construction contributed to the launch as they are currently working at Ysgol Bro Taf. They provided the school with six bird boxes and are providing support towards rewards for any school that completes the bronze award by September 2024.

4.5 Following the launch, award information and criteria were sent to all schools in RCT, including a sign-up form to indicate their participation in the award scheme.

4.6 In November 2023, an energy dashboard was launched as part of the RCT Schools' Eco Award. This was made available to all schools in RCT to assist schools in monitoring their energy use. Head teacher and pupil energy dashboards have been made available so that different levels of information can be accessed, as required.

## **5. CURRENT POSITION**

5.1 Since the launch in October 2023, a total of 21 schools completed the sign-up form to indicate participation in the bronze award during the 2023/2024 academic year.

- 5.2 As part of the bronze award criteria, participating schools must participate in the Council's Christmas card recycling competition, which is run by the Council's Waste Services Department. Due to the deadline involved in this element of the criteria, the sign-up period for the RCT Schools' Eco Award closed once the Christmas card competition was over. This was done to prevent any school from signing-up to our award scheme having already missed the chance to complete a mandatory part of the award criteria.
- 5.3 E-mails are sent out to participating schools throughout the academic year to encourage their continued efforts towards achieving the bronze award. These e-mails also include some useful tips and ideas for schools that could help them in meeting the award criteria. Two of these emails have been sent out to schools since the launch in October – the next one will be sent before the Easter holidays.
- 5.4 Schools participating in the RCT Schools' Eco Award in the 2023/2024 academic year have until September 2024 to complete all aspects of the award criteria. In September, participating schools will be asked to complete a form, identifying which aspects of the award criteria they have met.
- 5.5 Any school that successfully completes all of the bronze award criteria by September 2024 will receive a reward. These rewards will be items that are suitable for the school site and will help them in their efforts towards achieving the silver award. This could be bird boxes, bug hotels, hedgehog houses, raised beds etc.
- 5.6 In the Spring of 2024, work will begin on developing the criteria of the silver award, which will then launch in Autumn 2024. Schools that have completed the bronze level can then move on to the silver award in the 2024/2025 academic year.
- 5.7 Schools that did not participate in the bronze award in the current academic year will be encouraged to do so in the 2024/2025 academic year, thereby encouraging more schools to actively participate and contribute to the Council's Tackling Climate Change Strategy.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

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

## **7. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT/INVOLVEMENT**

There are no consultation implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations set out in the report. The rewards for schools successfully achieving the bronze award will be met from existing budgets and a contractor contribution.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

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

- 10.1 The Council has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 and is working to have the entire County Borough as close as possible to being carbon neutral by 2030 – this includes our schools. The Eco Schools' Award supports the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan 'Making a Difference' – 2020-24. Specifically, it contributes to 'Places' by supporting schools to reduce waste and increase recycling, reducing carbon and encouraging biodiversity.
- 10.2 The Schools' Eco Award also supports the seven well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – particularly 'A Prosperous Wales', 'A Resilient Wales' and 'A Globally Responsible Wales', as well as supporting the Sustainable Development principle of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by encouraging the improvement of well-being through the RCT Schools Eco Award, making sure that decisions we take today do not affect future generations from making the decisions they need in the future. It also reflects the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations Act with the award seeking to instil positive behaviours for the long-term by collaboration and integration and being focused on getting schools involved in preventative and precautionary action by taking positive actions to reduce carbon, increase recycling and improve biodiversity.

## **11. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS**

Participation in the Eco Schools Award is available to all schools across all electoral wards.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

- 12.1 The RCT Schools' Eco Award is getting our schools involved in improving the carbon/energy use of the County Borough. The Council aims to be carbon neutral by 2030 and has a target for the entire County Borough to be as close to carbon neutral as possible. The RCT Schools' Eco Award will contribute to these targets, by encouraging our school sites to reduce their energy use, improve biodiversity and emphasise the importance of accurate recycling.
- 12.2 This report provides an update of the current status of the RCT Schools' Eco Award. Schools successfully achieving the bronze award will be known in September 2024

once all participating schools have completed and submitted the criteria form. As mentioned previously, any school that successfully completes the bronze award by September 2024 will receive a reward. In the meantime, work will also begin on developing the silver award, with the aim of launching it in the Autumn of 2024.

- 12.3 Schools that did not participate in the bronze award in the current academic year will be encouraged to do so in the 2024/2025 academic year.

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