



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

COMMITTEE SUMMONS

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

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

YOU ARE SUMMONED to a Hybrid meeting of **CLIMATE CHANGE, FRONTLINE SERVICES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held on **WEDNESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2023** at **5.00 PM**.

Non Committee Members and Members of the public may request the facility to address the Committee at their meetings on the business listed although facilitation of this request is at the discretion of the Chair. It is kindly asked that such notification is made to Democratic Services by Monday, 16 October 2023 on the contact details listed above, including stipulating whether the address will be in Welsh or English.

It is the intention to live stream this meeting, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

AGENDA

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No's**

1. SCRUTINY RESEARCH

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

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

Note:

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

3. MINUTES

To approve, as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting held on the 27th June 2023.

5 - 8

REPORTS OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATIONS

4. CONSULTATIONS

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

5. BI-ANNUAL CABINET MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

To scrutinise any matters with the portfolio holder responsible for Climate Change and Corporate Services and to ensure that there are appropriate mechanisms in place to effectively scrutinise the Executive.

9 - 14

6. THINK CLIMATE RCT' THE COUNCIL'S TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2022-2025

To receive the Council's performance report in respect of its delivery of the Climate Change Strategy 22/23.

15 - 22

7. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

For Committee Members to pre-scrutinise the Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report.

23 - 44

OFFICER REPORTS

8. TREE AND HEDGEROW STRATEGY

For scrutiny members to scrutinise the ongoing delivery of the adopted RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy.

45 - 54

9. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any items, which the Chairman, by reason of special

circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

10. CHAIRS REVIEW & CLOSE

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

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

The Chair and Vice-Chair:

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

County Borough Councillors:

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

Officers:

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services & Communications
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development

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

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

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 27 June 2023 at 5.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors – The following Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Councillors were present online

Councillor C Middle (Chair)

Councillor G L Warren	Councillor P Binning
Councillor V Dunn	Councillor E L Dunning
Councillor G Holmes	Councillor W Hughes
Councillor G Jones	Councillor A O Rogers
Councillor W Treeby	Councillor P Evans
Councillor G O Jones	

Officers in attendance:-

Mrs S Handy – Members' Researcher & Scrutiny Officer
Ms J Nicholls – Principal Scrutiny Officer

County Borough Councillors in attendance:-

Councillor Crimmings, Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure
Councillor Leyshon, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services
Councillor Norris, Cabinet Member For Prosperity and Development

Apologies for absence

Councillor J Barton Councillor R Yeo

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee for the 2023-24 Municipal Year.

2 Apologies

Apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillors J. Barton

and R. Yeo.

3 Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the code of conduct, there were no declaration of interest pertaining to the agenda.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the 22nd March 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

5 Scrutiny Research

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

6 Consultations

The Members' Researcher & Scrutiny Officer referenced the consultation links, which were available through the 'RCT Scrutiny' website. Members were reminded that information is provided in respect of relevant consultations for consideration by the Committee, which are circulated on a monthly basis and updated on a fortnightly basis.

7 Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee - Forward Work Programme 2023-24

The Members' Researcher and Scrutiny Officer presented the Forward Work Programme 2023-24 to Members and sought Members approval of the work programme and invited any suggestions from Members.

Following this, discussions ensued.

A Member queried whether grass cutting could be referenced in the Tree and Hedgerow item and another Member questioned if the Public Rights of Way report could reference barbed wire and the relevant legislation surrounding it. The Members' Researcher and Scrutiny Officer confirmed that these items would be passed on to the relevant Officers.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Forward Work Programme 2023-24.

8 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to report.

9 Chairs Review and Close

The Chair thanked Members for attending and emphasised that the next meeting will be in October, where the Committee can start to utilise the Forward Work Programme.

This meeting closed at 5.08 pm

**Councillor C Middle
Chair.**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24

CLIMATE CHANGE FRONTLINE SERVICES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18TH OCTOBER 2023

BI-ANNUAL CABINET MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. To scrutinise any arising matters with the portfolio holder responsible for Climate Change and Corporate Services and to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to effectively scrutinise the Executive.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Scrutinise the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services in respect of matters considered and agreed by Cabinet, and any key decisions taken, during the period 11 May – 18 October 2023; and,
- 2.2 Identify any areas arising from those matters determined within this period which Committee wish to further scrutinise, as part of revisions to the committees published work programme, in relation to Climate Change.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.2. To provide the Climate Change and Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge the Cabinet in respect of the decisions taken in the defined decision-making period.

- 1.3. The recommendations seek to provide a structure to these sessions, to enable discussion and challenge to be focused upon a defined period and those individual decisions taken

4. BACKGROUND

- 1.4. As part of this Council's ongoing commitment to improve the function of Scrutiny as a critical friend of the Council, this item is being brought before the Climate Change Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee as part of Cabinet and Scrutiny engagement.
- 1.5. Such an approach will provide Scrutiny Members with the opportunity to further challenge the Executive, as the Cabinet Member can provide details relating to the investments being taken forward within the portfolio and the challenges faced by the Council.

5. SCRUTINY OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER

- 1.6. The role that the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee can play in holding the Council's decision-makers to account makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy. Scrutinising the Executive serves an important purpose in ensuring that decision makers of the Council are held accountable for their actions and decisions.
- 1.7. By Scrutinising the Cabinet Member Climate Change and Corporate Services, the public can gain a better understanding of their decision-making process and hold them accountable, which will promote openness and transparency within the Council. It will also ensure that those in Leadership positions are acting in the best interests of their constituents.
- 1.8. Scrutiny can also identify areas for improvement and drive positive changes, strengthening our governance arrangements. Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the authority itself. Conversely, poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership and service failure.
- 1.9. Under the [Terms of Reference](#) of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, Members have the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge areas that fall under the remit of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services. The main responsibility areas of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services cover the following areas:
 - Performance & Resources
 - Corporate Estates

- Carbon Reduction Commitment
- Digitalisation Strategy
- Procurement & Transitional Services
- Climate Change Champion

5.5 Members should note that future opportunity will be provided to the Committee to scrutinise the Cabinet Member Prosperity and Development and the Cabinet Member Environment and Leisure, in line with their Terms of Reference

5.6 Scrutiny in various forms is essential to ensuring accountability, transparency and fairness and ensures that political decisions are taken in the best interests of our residents.

5.7 Decisions taken forward by the Portfolio holder during the period 11 May - 18 October 2023

The decisions can be found by clicking on the following links below:-

27/09/23 [Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee Work Programme 2023-24](#)

27/09/23 [Think Climate RCT – The Council’s Tackling Climate Change Strategy 2022-2025](#)

27/09/23 [Nature on Your Doorstep': Update on the implementation of the Living Landscape project in Rhondda Cynon Taf](#)

23/05/23 [PLANNING AND BIODIVERSITY: RCT OBSERVATIONS TO WELSH GOVERNMENT REGARDING PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF PLANNING POLICY WALES.](#)

5.8 Questions should be focussed in respect of the above decisions taken by the Cabinet Member, to enable effective scrutiny of those decisions by committee members. The above decisions do not include exempt decisions considered by Cabinet Committee.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

1.10. None arising as a direct result of this report.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

1.11. There are no consultation requirements emanating from the recommendations set out in this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

1.12. There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

1.13. The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph Part 4 of the Constitution (Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules).

10. CONCLUSION

1.14. To provide the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to scrutinise, challenge and make recommendations for policy improvement under the remit of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE, FRONTLINE SERVICES AND PROSPERITY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18TH OCTOBER 2023

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND
COMMUNICATIONS**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

18 October 2023

'THINK CLIMATE RCT' THE COUNCIL'S TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2022-2025

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Scrutiny Committee with a first quarter position statement as part of an overview of our progress in delivering the Council's Climate Change Strategy, '[Think Climate RCT](#)' agreed in June 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider the information contained within the report;
- 2.2 Take a view on any potential areas for further consideration as part of the Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme;
- 2.3 Note the recommendation arising from the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee, see para 5.1, in respect of procured goods and services, and the impact on the Council's Carbon Footprint;
- 2.4 Note the potential to further embed the Council's response to Climate Change to the business of the Council as part of the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan; and,
- 2.5 Consider whether Members wish to scrutinise in greater depth any matters contained in the report in line with the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To assist the Council to meet its 2030 Carbon Neutral targets.

for RCT to be a carbon neutral Council,
for the whole County Borough is 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 implementation and delivery of the Council's wider Tackling Climate Change Strategy ['Think Climate RCT'](#) and associated strategies/plans.

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 In recent years there have been growing global, UK wide and national drives to reduce carbon emissions, keep global warming below 1.5°, protect nature and the environment and adapt to the current and projected changes in the climate and more frequent extreme weather events.

4.2 In 2019, Welsh Government declared a Climate Emergency and set out its approach in its strategy [Prosperity for All: A low Carbon Wales](#). Since then, the Welsh Government has put in place many and varied plans, strategies, targets, milestones, ambitions and deadlines for public bodies to meet. The latest UK Climate Change Committee's ['Progress Report on Reducing emissions in Wales'](#), published in June, indicated that *'while the First Carbon Budget (2016-2020) has been achieved, Wales is not yet on track to meet its targets for the second half of this decade and beyond'*. The report set out 58 recommendations across a number of areas, which are currently under consideration by the Minister.

4.3 More locally, whilst the Council had progressed energy saving and other carbon reduction projects, it also recognised the speed, complexity, interconnections and differing geographic and sectoral boundaries surrounding the response to tackling climate change across all the services we provide, purchase or commission.

4.4 In June 2022, following engagement with residents, staff and other stakeholders given the Covid restrictions in place at the time, Cabinet agreed the Council's Tackling Climate Change Strategy: ['Think Climate RCT'](#). 'Think Climate RCT' currently provides a structure and framework for our plans to decarbonise the Council and the County Borough. Also, by mirroring the Council's current Corporate Plan in its commitments in respect of Think Climate People: Think Climate Places and Think Climate Prosperity the Council started to embed carbon reduction into the business of the Council.

4.5 Since June 2022, there have been numerous reports of progress of projects presented to Cabinet, the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee and to Scrutiny Committees. A high level summary of progress has been included as a standing item in the quarterly Performance Reports considered by Cabinet, Quarter 4 update can be seen at [Section 7](#) for illustrative purposes.

4.6 By mirroring the priorities in the Council's current Corporate Plan; i.e. Think Climate People: Think Climate Places and Think Climate Prosperity, the Council has started to embed the Climate Change Strategy and carbon reduction into the business of the Council.

4.7 This report provides an overview of progress against 'Think Climate RCT' during Quarter 1 2023/24, with the opportunity to view the detailed plans across each of the Climate priorities. The ongoing work programme to deliver the Climate Change Strategy in 2023/24, will continue to be embedded within the action planning and reporting for the Council's priorities. Further specific reports, as deemed appropriate, will also continue to be reported to Cabinet, the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee and Scrutiny Committees, in accordance with the agreed work programmes.

5 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 This update was previously considered by the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee at its meeting on 27 September. Members indicated that the information/format was helpful and provided an overview of the wide range of activity and detail if needed in the associated linked reports and documents. However, there is an action [arising from the Sub Committee](#) to provide further information in respect of procured goods and services, at 67% currently the highest proportion of the Council's Carbon Footprint.
- 5.2 The update considers four areas of focus within the Climate Change Strategy, acknowledging that there are also projects which overlap or do not have a clear 'home'. Where this is the case, the items are included in the areas of 'best fit'.

CLIMATE CHANGE – contributing to our Carbon Reduction Targets

Summary of progress to 30 June 2023

Council Specific

Our Carbon Footprint

We are on target to complete the 2022/23 Carbon Footprint calculation for submission to Welsh Government in September. The 2021/22 footprint as reported to [Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee in December 2022](#) was 120,907.4 tonnes CO₂, with the largest part of our footprint, 67%, in our procured goods and services, and we continue to work with our suppliers to reduce their footprints. Actions to reduce our carbon footprint are set out in the Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan 2023-25 agreed by [Cabinet in March 2023](#).

Staff Awareness

We continue to raise staff awareness. Formal methods include embedding the need to reduce carbon into new job descriptions and induction training, management briefings and across the performance management processes, supported by the 'Think Climate' webpage. Staff are a key stakeholder group in the [Climate Change Engagement Plan](#) agreed by Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee in March 2023. E learning is nearing completion and will be available to staff and elected Members during Quarter 2.

Energy Efficiency and renewable energy

We have put in place a new process for identifying projects for the Carbon Reduction Programme through a review of energy audits and Display Energy Certificate data. Energy audits are ongoing, with the current focus on the top 50 consuming sites. This work is identifying potential wastage and putting in place more efficient energy efficient practices and targeted training for staff on site. The agreed 2023/24 Carbon Reduction Programme is being implemented and on target. The programme includes continuing to invest in solar energy installations on Council buildings and we are also progressing roof top solar PV screening for Council and leased buildings to inform work programmes.

Fleet

A plan to transition our fleet to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles was agreed by [Cabinet in September 2022](#) and we achieved our 2022/23 target of 14 cars, 78 light vans and 29 medium vans. Our progress is now dependent on finance, access to charging points and the results of a Fleet Maximisation project which will ensure that services have access to vehicles that best meet their needs. We are actively seeking funding to support the implementation of the Fleet Transition Plan. Welsh Government has confirmed that currently no grants are available for 2023/24. In the meantime, we are continuing to research alternative fuels and vehicle trials

CLIMATE CHANGE – contributing to our Carbon Reduction Targets

to ensure we keep abreast of technological developments. This quarter we attended Hydrogen vehicle and commercial EV demonstrations and trials.

Council Buildings, including schools.

The Office Accommodation Strategy 'Fit for the Future' and the Council's Operating Model and Working Arrangements Policy was approved by [Cabinet in May 2023](#) and is now being implemented. Among other things, this strategy locates Council buildings/services in buildings closer to the people that use, work and visit them and/or are accessible by public transport. As part of the strategy, we are progressing the move of the Council Headquarters from the Pavilions, Clydach Vale to Llys Cadwyn, Pontypridd. The consultation to inform the alternative use of [Clydach Vale](#) site as a location for a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT was agreed by [Cabinet in June 2023](#). Further detail on Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme can be found [here](#).

Across the County Borough

Think Climate People

1. We put in place campaigns to support and encourage lifestyle choices and highlighted the Council's work across a range of services and projects including: [the roll out of the new recycling arrangements](#) in advance of, and as part of, changes introduced in July 2023; raising awareness of local '[Lost Peatlands](#)' project and the RCT Local Nature Partnership [Living Landscapes Events](#) and a range of national climate and environmental campaigns.
2. Prepared for the opening of Canolfan Calon Taf at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, which aims to engage people in their local environment, contribute to activities with positive climate impact and increase expertise and a love of nature.
3. Continued to develop our bid for 'Sustainable Food Places' Bronze Award to be submitted in September 2023.
4. Helped to promote sustainable, local food in services and communities through initiatives including, Community Pantries and fridges and strengthening the Community Food Growing networks, Food Pantry and 'Big Bocs Bwyd' networks. However, this continues to prove challenging as a result of the Cost of Living crisis.
5. Implemented further developments in our '[Think Climate](#)' Web presence and following agreement of an Engagement Plan by the [Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee in March 2023](#), we met with the Older Peoples' Forum and put in place arrangements for face to face engagement with residents during July, August and September.
6. Continued to deliver workshops to support residents with Energy Efficiency measures.
7. Continued to work with third sector and community partners to maximise our resources and seek and showcase areas of expertise and numerous environmental volunteering opportunities across the County Borough.

Think Climate Places

1. Continued to develop and support the land based Solar Farm in Coed Ely, Hydro schemes including the Dare Valley and Treforest Weir projects with Geothermal projects also in the pipeline, subject to funding.
2. Saw the contractor starting work on the construction of the Amgen 1.5 MW single wind turbine.
3. Completed early stages of preparation to procure a 200KW Solar PV Development to decarbonise energy consumption at the waste water treatment plant in Bryn Pica.

CLIMATE CHANGE – contributing to our Carbon Reduction Targets

4. Secured grant funding of £396k from Welsh Government/Transport for Wales for 2023/24 to continue to implement EV Charging Strategy.
5. Increased the tonnage of household goods reused in [Council reuse outlets](#) from 68.05 tonnes in Q4 2022/23 to 80.59 tonnes for Q1 2023/24.
6. Continued to investigate how we can legally recycle or reuse seized and forfeited goods.
7. Progressed the development of Active Travel routes for Treorchy/Treherbert and Cwmbach as part of Cynon Trail and Maerdy/Ferndale.
8. Progressed combined mapping layer, which includes tree canopy coverage and natural tree regeneration. The information emerging will inform the priority areas for new tree planting.

Think Climate Prosperity

The Council has taken a number of steps to support people in poverty, many of which also reduce carbon emissions and making existing homes more energy efficient. We are currently researching data and evidence to inform the new Affordable Warmth Strategy. In the meantime, we continued to deliver strategic schemes including the joint promotion of [Nest](#) home energy services with Welsh Government and progressed the creation and implementation of 'ECO Flex' scheme and [Great British Insulation Scheme](#) which will enable additional external funding to be levered into the area. Scoping joint project with Cwm Taf LHB in respect of 'Heat and Save' interventions for residents affected by living in cold related homes with a view to improving the referral process to engage with these residents. This quarter

- 47 new Heating Grant applications were received.
- 23 Heating Grants were completed with £75k grant being awarded.
- 1 Minor Heat and Save Assistance grant has been completed.
- 12 referrals were made to the Housing Energy Officer, for advice on energy saving measures or assistance that could help them with their bills.
- 38 Solar Panel Grant applications were received.
- 28 Solar Panel Grants were completed (£31k grants awarded).

We also

1. Progressed the new RCT eco School Awards to be launched in the Autumn term. The Award comprises three sections: biodiversity, waste management and carbon management. As part of the evidence for the award, we started to develop school-based dashboards. Once in place, the Dashboards will help schools to monitor carbon and energy saving.
2. Continued to work with suppliers to help them to identify and reduce their footprints.
3. Worked with 'Visit Wales' (VW) to start to develop an RCT Sustainable Accommodation Toolkit using VW's accreditation scheme to identify visitor accommodation in RCT which incorporates aspects of sustainable and green tourism.
4. Implemented a new package of grant support for local businesses. The criteria have changed to allow businesses to use grants to meet their carbon reduction and energy efficiency needs, i.e.:
 - a) The Enterprise Investment Fund has been broadened to include support for carbon reduction.
 - b) The Large Scale Property Improvements grant has been refocussed to encourage energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

CLIMATE CHANGE – contributing to our Carbon Reduction Targets

- c) A Commercial Improvement Grant has been introduced which will support larger scale improvements to commercial buildings with energy efficiency intrinsic to design e.g. replacement windows and doors, shop fronts.

The associated action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#)

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 specific consultation implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

There are no stand-alone financial implications resulting from the recommendations set out in the report.

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 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 and aligns directly to the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan 'Making a Difference' – 2020-24.

10.2 This report reflects the Sustainable Development principle of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by improving all aspects of Well-being through 'Think Climate RCT'; taking steps to make sure that decisions we take today do not affect future generations from making the decisions they need in the future and contributing to the seven national Well-being Goals as set out in Appendix A of 'Think Climate RCT'.

11 Conclusion

11.1 The Council has a target to become a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030, and for the County Borough to be as near to Carbon Neutral as possible by the same date. Tackling Climate Change Strategy 'Think Climate RCT' sets out a framework of the action the Council will take

to make significant progress and lay the strong foundations to enable the Council to make progress towards achieving the 2030 targets as well as contributing to the Welsh Government carbon reduction ambitions for Net Zero public sector by 2030 and its target for a Net Zero Wales by 2050 or sooner.

- 11.2 This report provides an update of the first three months of 2023/24. Whilst the Council can demonstrate positive steps towards meeting Carbon reductions targets, across the Council to date, continuing progress will depend on a number of factors outside our direct control, including access to funding, technology, skills; lifestyle choices of our residents and wider policy direction and integration emerging from Welsh Government. Further embedding of carbon reduction into the business of the Council through the new Corporate Plan will continue to strengthen the Council's own arrangements.
- 11.3 Achieving our targets requires all stakeholders and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf to work together. The Council will continue to work with all stakeholders across the County Borough, the region and across Wales

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972
as amended by
THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT, 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
18 October 2023

THINK CLIMATE RCT' THE COUNCIL'S TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2022-2025

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023 /24

CLIMATE CHANGE, FRONTLINE SERVICES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18th October 2023

PRE-SCRUTINY OF THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To pre-scrutinise the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that: -

- 2.1 Members undertake pre scrutiny on the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report attached at Appendix 1 to this report, thus providing Scrutiny with an opportunity to contribute to this matter; and
- 2.2 The Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee provide comment on the report which will form part of the reported feedback to Cabinet, at its meeting to be held on the 23rd October 2023.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need for Scrutiny to consider and scrutinise the proposed Council's Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report prior to formal consideration by Council.

- 3.2 The need to advise Cabinet of the comments and observations of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee prior to their consideration of the Report.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) require the Council to produce an annual report detailing CIL income and expenditure (Appendix A).
- 4.2 The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) also require the Council to publish an Infrastructure List (known as the Regulation 123 List) (Appendix B). The List should set out the infrastructure, which the Council considers it is likely to apply CIL revenue against.
- 4.3 At the meeting of the Cabinet held on 23 July 2015, Members agreed the process for formulating, monitoring and revising the Regulation 123 list, which includes that the relevant Scrutiny Committee/Group review the operation of the list and consider the annual 123 list and annual CIL financial monitoring report and make recommendations to Cabinet where appropriate.

5. PRE SCRUTINY

- 5.1 Members are reminded that the purpose of pre scrutiny activity is to influence the decisions before they are made. The Council's Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Committee continues to have the opportunity to explore and comment on a number of reports in advance of the Cabinet's consideration to bring a different perspective to the decisions made and enabling Cabinet decisions to be more informed.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this financial report, however, the equality and diversity implications of any infrastructure schemes that will be funded by CIL will be considered in the development of those projects.

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 There are no consultation requirements arising from this report.

8. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no additional budget requirements.

9. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 9.1 Infrastructure funded through CIL will support the Building a Strong Economy and Creating Neighbourhoods Where People are Proud to Live and Work priorities in the Corporate Plan.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Members of the Climate Change Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee are asked to pre scrutine the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report which will form part of the reported feedback to Cabinet, at its meeting to be held on the 23rd October 2023.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

as amended by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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

Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report

18th October 2023

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATIONS**



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023/24

CABINET

23 OCTOBER 2023

CIL ANNUAL MONITORING 2022/2023

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PORFOLIO HOLDER COUNCILLOR MARK NORRIS**

Author: Jim Bailey, Head of Planning

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval in respect of the contents of the CIL Annual Monitoring Report and the proposed changes to the Regulation 123 List.
- 1.2 To advise Cabinet of the pre scrutiny by the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee in respect of the Community Infrastructure Levy. The recommendations will be provided verbally by the Director of Prosperity and Development.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To enable the Council to continue to operate a Community Infrastructure Levy in accordance with the statutory regulations.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) require the Council to produce an **annual report detailing CIL income and expenditure** (Appendix A). Set out in paragraph 5.2 below is the details of the eighth of these annual reports since the Council introduced CIL in December 2014.
- 4.2 The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) also require the Council to publish an Infrastructure List (known as the Regulation 123 List). The List should set out the infrastructure, which the Council considers it is likely to apply CIL revenue to.
- 4.3 At the meeting of the Cabinet held on 23 July 2015, Members agreed the process for formulating, monitoring and revising the Regulation 123 list, which includes that the relevant Scrutiny Committee/Group review the operation of the list and consider the annual 123 list and annual CIL financial monitoring report and make recommendations to Cabinet where appropriate.

5.0 MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

CIL INCOME & EXPENDITURE

- 5.1 The Regulations require that CIL income must be split into three parts:
- 80% to be applied to infrastructure to support growth of the Council's area (known as the 'Strategic CIL' and is to be spent on items on the Regulation 123 List).
 - 15% to be passed to the Community/Town Council in whose boundary the development that paid CIL is located for the provision of local infrastructure improvements of other measures that support the development of the area.
 - 5% to be applied towards implementation and ongoing administration.
- 5.2 The total CIL income received in 2022/2023 was £890,493.47
- 80% as Strategic income = £319,644.05*
 - 15% Local income = £499,967.36
 - 5% Administration income = £70,882.06

*(*80% Strategic income is less than the 15% Local income due to the amount being off-set against the infrastructure balance until the cost of the new primary school at the Llanilid development has been met. The total cost of the new primary school is £10,223,499.00))*

Strategic income received in 2022/2023 was £319,644.05
 Strategic income carried forward from 2021/2022 was £1,018,347.70
 Strategic income spent in 2022/2023 was £395,000.00
 Balance of Strategic CIL income £942,991.75

- 5.3 The **annual monitoring report** at Appendix A provides a breakdown of the CIL receipts received and the distribution of 15% of CIL receipts to Community/Town Councils.
- 5.4 Cabinet agreed on 20th September 2018 to spend £395,000.00 of Strategic CIL on Ffynnon Taf Primary School. The project included a new build extension (4 classrooms and a hall) and refurbishments to the current school buildings for school and community use. The funds were drawn down in 2022/2023.

THE REGULATION 123 LIST

- 5.5 It is proposed that there are minor amendments to the **Regulation 123 List** (considered at Cabinet on the 17 October 2022). The list proposes highway and education projects that support and mitigate the growth anticipated through the Council's Local Development Plan. The proposed List is set out in Appendix C.
- 5.6 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the **Regulation 123 List** (Appendix B) for publication on the Council web-site for 28 days and if there are no adverse comments received then the 123 List can be adopted. It is further recommended that the notification of the consultation be sent to all elected Members, Town and Community Councils and to the Members of the Council's Developers Forum.

6.0 PRE SCRUTINY

- 6.1 As outlined within the Committee's Terms of Reference, pre-scrutiny and Members of the CIL is a role placed on the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.2 In light of this role, pre scrutiny on the CIL will be undertaken by the Committee on the 18 October 2023 and a verbal update will be provided by the Director of Prosperity and Development.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 7.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this financial report, however, the equality and diversity implications of any infrastructure schemes that will be funded by CIL will be considered in the development of those projects.

8.0 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 8.1 As set out in paragraph 5.6 above.

9.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this financial report, however, the Welsh Language Impact Assessment of any infrastructure scheme that will be funded by the CIL will be considered in the development of those projects.

10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

10.1 There are no additional budget requirements. The CIL receipts and spend for 2022/2023 is set out at Appendix A.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

11.1 The report and appendices have been prepared in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended).

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

12.1 Infrastructure funded through CIL will support the Building a Strong Economy and Creating Neighbourhoods Where People are Proud to Live and Work priorities in the Corporate Plan.

13.0 STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

13.1 Successful implementation of the Regulation 123 list will be relevant to electoral wards.

14.0 CONCLUSION

14.1 The Regulation 123 List is considered appropriate to assist in funding schemes that support growth in the County Borough.

Other Information: -

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Leanne Lott (01443) 281114



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

23 OCTOBER 2023

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNCILLOR MARK NORRIS**

Item:

Background Papers

Officer to contact: Jim Bailey, Head of Planning

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rhondda cynon taf

community infrastructure levy

ardoll seilwaith cymunedol

Monitoring Report 2022/2023

Regulation 62 – Monitoring Report 2022/2023

Background

Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charges took effect on 31 December 2014 and the Council is both a CIL Charging and a CIL Collecting Authority. Regulation 62 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) requires CIL Charging Authorities to produce an annual report detailing CIL income and expenditure. This is Rhondda Cynon Taf's eighth annual report covering the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

Allocation of CIL

CIL income is required to be allocated as follows:

- Up to 5% of CIL can be applied towards implementation and ongoing administration
- 15% of CIL (excluding surcharges) is passed to the Community/Town Council in whose boundary the development that paid the CIL is located, for the provision of local infrastructure improvements or other measures to support the development of the area (referred to as local CIL).
- 80% of CIL is to be applied to strategic infrastructure to support the growth of the CIL Charging Authority's area (referred to as Strategic CIL).

Total CIL Income

Total CIL income in 2022/2023 was £890,493.47

Strategic 80% (to be spent on items on Regulation 123 List)

Strategic income received in 2022/2023 was £319,644.05

Strategic income carried forward from 2021/2022 was £1,018,347.70

Strategic income spent in 2022/2023 was £395,000.00

Balance of Strategic CIL income £942,991.75

Details of each CIL receipt and how it is apportioned is set out in Appendix A.

Local 15%

Local CIL income in 2022/2023 was £499,967,36

Rhondda Cynon Taf has 12 Community/Town Council areas, which are: Gilfach Goch, Hirwaun, Llanharan, Llanharry, Llantrisant, Llantwit Fardre, Pontyclun, Pontypridd, Rhigos, Taffs Well, Tonyrefail and Ynysybwl

Local CIL (15%) income received between 1st April 2022 and 30th September 2022 was £190,662.05. £184,401.59 was passed to the relevant Community/Town Council in October 2022 and the balance of £6,260.46 was in an area where there was no Community/Town Council.

The carry forward balance of £153,860.57 was also be paid to Llanharan Community Council in October 2022. This payment is in relation to Planning Application 19/1082/16.

£309,305.31 was received between 1st October 2022 and 31st March 2023. £12,357.97 was passed to the relevant Community/Town Council in April 2023 and the balance of £296,947.34 has been carried forward to 2023/2024.

Balance for areas where there is no Community/Town Council 2022/23 is £8,478.82.

The amount passed to each Community/Town Council is set out in Appendix B.

Administration 5%

Administrative Income in 2022/2023 was £70,882.06

Administrative income carried forward from 2021/2022 was £114,284.07

Balance of Administration Income £185,166.13

*(*80% Strategic income is less than the 15% Local income due to the amount being offset against the infrastructure balance until the cost of the new primary school at the Llanilid development has been met. The total cost of the new primary school is £10,223,499.00)*

CIL carried forward to 2023/2024

The amount of CIL carried forward to 2023/2024 is set out in the following table:

CIL CARRIED FORWARD	AMOUNT
Strategic CIL	£942,991.75
Local CIL	Areas where there is no Town/Community Council £8,478.82. Llanharan Community Council deferred payment of £296,947.34 received in 2022/2023 and this is to be paid in 2023/2024.
Administrative CIL	£185,166.13

Appendix A –CIL INCOME RECEIVED IN 2022/2023

Date received	Planning Application Reference	Site Address	CIL Charge Development Type	Community/ Town Council	Amount	Strategic	Admin	Local (Community/ Town Council)
19/04/2022	20/0963/16	Former Clariant Site, Llantrisant Road, Church Village, CF38 2SN (first instalment)	Zone 3	Llantwit Fardre	£205,131.52	£164,105.22	£10,256.57	£30,769.73
01/06/2022	18/1423/10	The Meadows, Coedely, Tonyrefail (third instalment)	Zone 2	Tonyrefail	£70,300.62	£56,240.50	£3,515.03	£10,545.09
09/09/2022	19/1081/16	Land At Former Open Cast Coal Site and Land To The North Of The A473, Llanilid (third instalment)	Zone 3	Llanharan	£143,086.77	£0	£0	£143,086.77
16/09/2022	21/1546/10	Former Co-Operative, Dunraven Street, Tonypandy, CF40 1AP (full payment)	Zone 1	No Community/Town Council	£41,736.40	£33,389.12	£2,086.82	£6,260.46

18/11/2022	19/0516/10	Penuel Chapel, High Street, Llantrisant, CF72 8BQ (final instalment)	Zone 3	Llantrisant	£12,085.88	£9,668.71	£604.29	£1,812.88
25/11/2022	18/1423/10	The Meadows, Coedely, Tonyrefail (fourth instalment)	Zone 2	Tonyrefail	£70,300.62	£56,240.50	£3,515.03	£10,545.09
01/02/2023	19/1082/16	Land At Former Open Cast Coal Site and Land To The North Of The A473, Llanilid (second instalment)	Zone 3	Llanharan	£204,764.89	£0	£50,904.32	£153,860.57
15/03/2023	19/1081/16	Land At Former Open Cast Coal Site and Land To The North Of The A473, Llanilid (fourth instalment)	Zone 3	Llanharan	£143,086.77	£0	£0	£143,086.77
TOTAL	-	-	-	-	£890,493.47	£319,644.05	£70,882.06	£499,967.36

Regulation 88, surcharges cannot be apportioned to community/town councils and must be split 5% administration and 95% strategic infrastructure.

The 5% admin fee has also been used to off-set against the infrastructure balance until the cost of the new primary school at the Llanilid development has been met. The 5% Admin fee that would have been received to date is now being clawed back from the Llanilid payments.

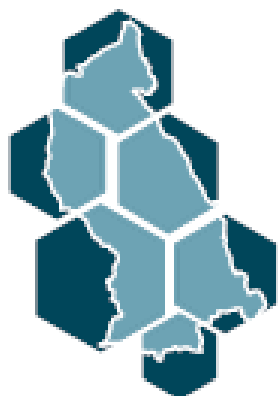
Appendix B – CIL INCOME LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMUNITY/TOWN COUNCILS

Community/Town Council	15% received in 2022/23 to be passed to local council	Amount paid in October 2022	Amount paid in April 2023	Balance c/f
Gilfach Goch	£0	£0	£0	£0
Hirwaun	£0	£0	£0	£0
Llanharan	£440,034.11	£296,947.34 (amount paid includes the c/f balance of £153,860.57)	£0	£296,947.34
Llanharry	£0	£0	£0	£0
Llantrisant	£1,812.88	£0	£1,812.88	£0
Llantwit Fardre	£30,769.73	£30,769.73	£0	£0
Pontyclun	£0	£0	£0	£0
Pontypridd	£0	£0	£0	£0
Rhigos	£0	£0	£0	£0
Taffs Well	£0	£0	£0	£0
Tonyrefail	£21,090.18	£10,545.09	£10,545.09	£0
Ynysybwl	£0	£0	£0	£0
Non-Community Council/Town Council area	£6,260.46	£0	£0	£8,478.82*

*

£2,218.36 (carried forward from 2019/2020) to be spent in Aberaman South Ward

£6,260.46 (carried forward from 2022/2023) to be spent in Tonypany



rhondda cynon taf
community infrastructure levy
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Regulation 123 List of Infrastructure
List Updated October 2023

In accordance with the requirement of Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) the following table comprises the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Infrastructure List. The list includes the infrastructure the Council considers it is likely to apply Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) revenue to:

Education Projects:

- New/additional education provision to serve the land at Mwyndy / Talbot Green;
- New/additional education provision to serve Trane Farm, Tonyrefail;
- New/additional education provision at the former open cast site north of A473, Llanilid

Transportation Projects:

- Provision of the A473/A4119 Talbot Green to Ynysmaerdy Relief Road;
- A4119/A4093 roundabout, Tonyrefail – signalised junction and active travel improvements
- Llanharan Link Road
- Cynon Gateway North
- South Coed Ely Link Dualling - upgrade the A4119 between Talbot Green and Coedely to dual carriageway standard
- A4119 Castell Mynach signalised junction
- Llanharan Community Route – Construction of new active travel routes
- Trefforest Industrial Estate – Construction of new active travel routes
- Trefforest Industrial Estate - New Railway Station
- Aberdare – Hirwaun extension of passenger rail services
- A473 between Tonteg roundabout and Upper Boat Roundabout

Please note:

The Regulation 123 list is not prioritised and projects can be added to the list or removed at the discretion of the Council, subject to appropriate consultation.

The inclusion of a project or type of infrastructure on the list does not signify a commitment from the Council to fund (either in whole or part) the listed project or type of infrastructure. The order of the list does not imply any preference or priority

Infrastructure not contained within the Regulation 123 List may be required by developer contributions or in-kind via a section 106 agreement. Such contributions will accord with Regulation 122 and 123 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Consultation

Background

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Authority. Since its CIL charges took effect on 31st December 2014, it has published a Regulation 123 list on its web-site.

The Regulation 123 list is a list containing infrastructure projects that may be fully or partly funded by CIL.

The following changes to the Council's Regulation 123 list are proposed as set out in the following table:

Infrastructure Requirement	Proposed Amendment	Reason For Amendment
Education Projects:		
New/additional education provision to serve the land at Mwyndy / Talbot Green;	To remain unaltered	N/A
New/additional education provision to serve Trane Farm, Tonyrefail	To remain unaltered	N/A
New/additional education provision to serve Taffs Well	To be removed	Infrastructure has been part funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy.
New/additional education provision at the former open cast site north of the A473, Llanilid	To remain unaltered	N/A
Transportation Projects:		
Provision of the A473/A4119 Talbot Green to Ynysmaerdy Relief Road	To remain unaltered	N/A
A4119/A4093 roundabout, Tonyrefail – signalised junction and active travel improvements	To remain unaltered	N/A
Llanharan By-Pass	Amend Description to: Llanharan Link Road	N/A
Cynon Gateway (A465)	Amend Description to: Cynon Gateway North	N/A
South Coed Ely Link Dualling - upgrade the	To remain unaltered	N/A

A4119 between Talbot Green and Coedely to dual carriageway standard		
A4119 Castell Mynach signalised junction	To remain unaltered	N/A
Llanharan Community Route – Construction of new active travel routes	To remain unaltered	N/A
Trefforest Industrial Estate – Construction of new active travel routes	To remain unaltered	N/A
Trefforest Industrial Estate – New railway station	To remain unaltered	N/A
Aberdare – Hirwaun extension of passenger rail services	To remain unaltered	N/A
A473 between Tonteg Roundabout and Upper Boat Roundabout	To remain unaltered	N/A

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

THE RCT TREE, WOODLANDS AND HEDGEROW STRATEGY

18 OCTOBER 2023

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY & DEVELOPMENT IN
DISCUSSION WITH COUNCILLOR CHRISTINA LEYSHON THE CABINET
MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE & CORPORATE SERVICES**

Author: Simon Gale

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 For the Committee to consider the progress on delivering against the objectives as set out in the RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note and consider the progress on delivering the RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy; and,
2.2 Consider whether Members wish to scrutinise any matters contained within this report in greater detail in line with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In December 2022, the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee approved a new RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy to ensure that we value, promote and protect the significant extent of existing woodlands in Rhondda Cynon Taf, recognising the importance of our semi-natural woodland habitats and especially our ancient woodlands.
3.2 The tree strategy also provides the foundation of the Council's ambition to deliver RCT's largest tree planting programme in a generation and will promote the principles of 'right tree – right place - right reason'.
3.3 A planting season has passed since the adoption of the strategy and plans are in place for the next planting season. This report allows Members to consider the actions taken under the strategy so far and the activity being undertaken over the next 12 months.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 As a Council, we are committed to investing in our green spaces 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 promote biodiversity, enhance air quality and reduce the impact of greenhouse gasses.
- 4.2 Rhondda Cynon Taf is one of the few heavily wooded areas in the UK and probably the only Local Authority area with such a large population of both people and trees.
- 4.3 Our trees, hedgerows, and woodlands are an integral part of nature, supporting a wide range of insects, animals, birds and plant life. Trees can improve the environmental quality of our urban areas, delivering physical, social and economic benefits as well as mitigating climate change, improving storm water management, air quality, biodiversity, visual amenity and more.
- 4.4 The value of trees to the Council and the residents of RCT is significant, from the well-established aesthetic and landscape benefits, to local air quality, water cycling and shade.
- 4.5 This value is recognised by the Council and in December 2022, the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee approved a new RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy. The focus of the Strategy is to actively protect Rhondda Cynon Taf's trees, woodlands and hedgerows that all benefit our environment so significantly. The strategy sets out a robust framework with the over-arching aims of:
- Protect, regenerate and care for RCT's existing trees and woodlands
 - Encouraging new tree and hedgerow planting in appropriate areas to benefit well-being, pollution, climate change and local pride in our surroundings
 - Maintaining the extent of urban tree cover and to extend the canopy cover in urban areas where there is less than 10%
 - Encouraging appropriate natural regeneration of woodland to increase canopy cover, whilst protecting open habitats of biodiversity value
 - To provide a framework for decision making and establishing a prioritised action plan for 2022 -2032
- 4.6 The strategy is ambitious in its aims of valuing, protecting and enhancing our extensive portfolio of existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows whilst at the same time seeking to undertake an accelerated tree planting programme that will be the largest seen in RCT in decades.
- 4.7 The strategy also provides a unified direction for all Council services in respect of our tree activity and provides a framework to consider the organisational and resource requirements needed to address the current challenges and the opportunities highlighted by the broader scope of the climate change and biodiversity emergencies.

5 DRAFT RCT TREE, WOODLAND AND HEDGEROW STRATEGY – ACTIVITY TO DATE

5.1 In its first year, the new Strategy has provided the framework for starting to implement our stated ambition of undertaking the largest tree planting programme in a generation, the details of which are set out in sections 5.2 – 5.10. Furthermore, the focus the strategy places on protecting our existing woodlands has set the context for research into the extent of natural regeneration across the County Borough. The findings of that research are set out in sections 5.14 – 5.16.

Tree Planting

5.2 Our tree planting activity has been coordinated through a cross-council group of officers as part of the Council's ongoing Nature's Assets agenda. The tree planting itself was delivered 'in-house' through our Parks/Streetcare teams and in this first year, focused mainly on schools and parks.

5.3 In terms of schools and led by the 21st Century Schools team, an ambitious multi-year tree planting programme has been developed for school sites across RCT. It is considered that tree planting in schools is a great way for pupils to connect with nature while helping the environment. It links to many areas of the curriculum, and it is a fun, hands-on opportunity as a project for gardening and eco clubs.

5.4 In total 10,050 trees/hedgerows were planted, over 9 schools in this first phase and by planting a larger number of smaller trees this will help longer term establishment of the hedgerows. Some examples are shown below.



This hedgerow in Gwauncelyn School will eventually provide screening and greening of the school fence line.

In a few years these hedgerow plants will completely screen the playing field at Pontypridd School and provide added security.

These hedgerows at Tonyrefail school will provide screening and cut down wind speed.

- 5.5 An 'After Care' sheet, has been developed to be distributed to the school sites who have newly planted trees/hedgerows with a view to enabling staff and pupils to remain involved in the ongoing maintenance of the trees and cut down on maintenance costs.
- 5.6 In terms of planting in parks and open spaces, this was undertaken at locations across the county borough and in consultation with the local members. The majority of trees planted were larger, ornamental trees when compared to the smaller hedgerow trees that made up the bulk of the school planting. The detail of the number of trees planted is shown in the table below.

	Trees	Hedging	Shrubs
Rhondda	83	80	21
Cynon	109	0	23
Taff	105	0	0
Totals	297	80	44

Protecting Our Existing Woodlands

- 5.7 One of the key aims of the new Tree Strategy is to protect our existing natural woodlands. One of the best examples of our natural woodlands is Glyncornel Woods. Its quality and importance was recognised when it was named as part of the Queen's Green Canopy, a nationwide network of 70 Ancient Woodlands dedicated to Her Majesty in celebration of her Platinum Jubilee in 2022.
- 5.8 The woodland is managed by the Council and was nominated because it is an excellent example of an Ancient Semi Natural oak woodland that survived the industrial revolution and because it is a relatively pristine example of an upland oak woodland in Wales. Glyncornel was one of only 9 woodlands chosen in Wales (and 70 in total in the whole of the UK) and earlier this year its nomination was marked by the planting of one of the Platinum Jubilee 'Tree of Trees' (see photo below left with Councillors Webber and Leyshon, our Mayor and the Lord-Lieutenant Pete and Suzanne Vaughan).



- 5.9 This tree was one of the 350 trees which were arranged into the shape of a single large tree named the 'Tree of Trees' and was placed in front of Buckingham Palace as part of the Jubilee celebrations (see photo above right).

Natural Regeneration

- 5.10 One of the key actions falling out of the strategy was to gain a better understanding of the level of tree cover across the county borough and what role natural regeneration plays in how our woodlands are evolving.
- 5.11 Earlier this year, a study was commissioned to establish the extent of woodland cover change within the Council's own land ownership portfolio between 2003 and 2020 and specifically as a result of natural regeneration. This is also required to inform the Carbon accounting process the Council is undertaking as part of our Climate Change commitments.
- 5.12 The mapping and analysis of the 56 larger land holdings show that woodland cover within the Council land holding was calculated as 424.82 ha in 2003, whilst woodland cover in the same area was calculated as 720.34 ha in 2020. In percentage terms, this is an increase from around 24% of the Council land holding area to 40%. Essentially, it identifies a near 300 hectare increase in woody (woodland/scrub) cover on the RCT sites assessed between 2003 and 2020. This change provides clear evidence that natural tree colonisation and regeneration is delivering increased woodland cover at a significant rate in the county borough and should be welcomed.

6 DRAFT RCT TREE, WOODLAND AND HEDGEROW STRATEGY – NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 It is proposed that we continue the programme of planting in schools and public spaces in the way outlined in section 5 of this report. The planning of this year's planting is at an advanced stage with a view to again planting hedgerows in schools and also ornamental plants and native trees within public open spaces.
- 6.2 The specific species and locations have been chosen not only for the environmental benefits but to ensure the trees are not of a large nature to impact on complaints relating to light, view, TV signal etc. Planting locations have been reviewed for underground utilities, overhead wires and proximity to properties.

Furthermore, the locations have been carefully assessed to ensure no conflict with any other land uses or designations such as wildflower biodiversity sites, SINC's, other department uses, etc.

6.3 The planting in open spaces seeks to concentrate on increasing the area of tree canopy cover within the five urban areas with the lowest cover in the county borough, which are:

- Brynna/Llanharan - 9.8%
- Beddau/Church Village - 11.7%
- Glifach Goch - 12.2%
- Glyncoch - 12.4%
- Tonyrefail - 15.8%

as at baseline year 2013

6.4 The schools planting initiative for year 2 of our programme includes 17 schools and 41,660 hedgerow plants. The detail is outlined in the table below.

School name and location	#plants
Maerdy Community Primary School, Graig Wen, Maerdy Ferndale, CF43 4TW	2220
Williamstown Primary School, Dinas Isaf Ind Est, Penrhiwfer, Tonypany, CF40 1AG	632
Penrhys Primary School, Heol Pendyrus, Penrhys, Ferndale, CF43 3PL	752
Treorchy Comprehensive School, Station Road, Treorchy, CF42 6UL	6740
Porth Community School, Cemetery Road, Porth, CF39 0BS	2048
Aberdare Park Primary School, Hirwaun Road, Trecynon Aberdare, CF44 8LU	208
Abercynon Community Primary, Ynysmeurig Road, Abercynon, CF45 4SU	920
Capcoch Primary School, School Street, Abercwmboi, CF44 6AD	1328
Cwmaman Primary, Glanaman Road, Cwmaman CF44 6LA	600
Cwmbach Church in Wales Primary School, Tirfounder Road, Cwmbach, CF44 0AT	664
Pengeulan Primary School, Penrhiwceiber Road, Mountain Ash, CF45 3UW	120
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castellau, Castellau Road, Beddau, CF38 2AA	1504
Llwynocrwn Primary School, Llwynocrwn Road, Beddau, CF38 2BE	3000

Brynnau Primary School, Williams Street, Brynna, CF72 9QJ	464
Llanharan Primary School, Llwynbrain Terrace, Llanharan CF72 9PW	3080
Y Pant Comprehensive School, Cowbridge Road, Talbot Green, CF72 8YQ	11564
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School, New Road, CF45 4DG	5816

6.5 The next stage is for officers to engage with local members for each of the planting locations proposed (both open spaces and schools) to ensure that there are no local conflicts with what is being proposed.

Future Years

6.6 Further opportunities have been identified to continue the schools planting programme for another 2 years after this one and if continued, by year 4 we will have filled all viable land within schools and involved all but the fully hard landscaped school sites.

6.7 Work is also underway to understand how we can obtain even greater value out of the choices we make when deciding where to plant trees in our urban areas. Using the principle of ‘right tree – right place - right reason’, officers are currently overlaying mapping data of areas in Council ownership; the areas with low canopy cover; areas that are liable to surface water flooding; and areas with air quality issues.

6.8 In analysing this data, we will be able to create a heat map of areas where we can get multiple benefits from our tree planting activity and prioritise planting accordingly. It is anticipated that in adopting this approach we can reduce the potential for surface water flooding through adopting a SUDS approach, improve air quality where it is needed the most and generally improve the appearance of the local area.

6.9 It is anticipated that this work will be completed in time to inform activity in the next tree planting season (2024/25).

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/ SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

7.1 None as a direct result of this strategy.

8 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

9 CONSULTATION/ INVOLVEMENT

9.1 None necessary as a direct result of this report but engagement will be undertaken with the relevant local members ahead of the proposed planting programme.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None directly related to this strategy but there will be additional staff, capital and revenue impacts as plans under the strategy area develop. The tree planting activity is funded through the Council's Climate Change/Carbon Reduction budget.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

11.1 The enhancement of trees, woodlands and hedgerows in the County Borough is directly related to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act. The Council also has specific responsibilities in terms of tree/public safety and Tree Preservation Orders.

12. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

12.1 The Tree Strategy 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. 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 tree 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.

13. CONCLUSION

13.1 The Strategy sets out ambitious targets and objectives for tree planting in the county borough alongside a clear intention to protect and enhance our existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows. This report demonstrates a strong start to implementation of the Council's commitments in respect of trees and the wider Climate Change agenda.

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