

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019 /20

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT LOW CARBON VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

3rd September 2019

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Overview & Scrutiny with the findings and ten recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group which was established to consider the development of Infrastructure to support Low Carbon Vehicle Ownership in Rhondda Cynon Taf following the Notice of Motion considered by Council at its meeting held on the [28th February 2018](#). The Notice of Motion stood in the names of County Borough Councillors M. Griffiths and J. Bonetto.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee acknowledge the findings and agree the recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group established to consider the development of infrastructure, including the necessary refuelling infrastructure for low carbon vehicles throughout RCT, which are set out at Section 6 of the report;
- 2.2 Subject to agreement by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, request that the Service Director – Democratic Services & Communications, presents the recommendations agreed and endorsed by the committee to a future meeting of the Council's Cabinet for consideration.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Working Group was established following the adoption of a Notice of Motion by Council on 28 February 2018 which called for *“the development of plans to support Low Carbon Vehicle infrastructure in Rhondda Cynon Taf by establishing a Working Group to look at the development of this infrastructure, which will report back to Cabinet key recommendations....”*

- 3.2 On the 3rd September 2018 members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to seek nominations for two members from each of the respective Scrutiny Committees, to form a politically balanced Scrutiny Working Group which would undertake a review of the Council's plans to support Low Carbon Vehicle infrastructure. Nominations from Co-opted Members would also be welcome. It was further agreed that the work would involve the application of the, then, draft Scrutiny toolkit developed by the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner.
- 3.3 Following nominations, the Scrutiny Working Group comprised of County Borough Councillors L. M. Adams (Chair), J. Williams, J. Bonetto, A Chapman, S Rees-Owen, G. Hughes, M. Griffiths and Co-opted Member J. Fish (Co-opted Member)
- 3.4 The Notice of Motion called for the development of plans to support Low Carbon Vehicle (LCV) infrastructure in Rhondda Cynon Taf, noting that that there appeared to be no public LCV charging infrastructure in Rhondda Cynon Taf, with limited availability across Wales. This was supported by the fact that that the UK Government had outlined plans to ban petrol and diesel vehicles by 2040. Members felt it was vital that the development of infrastructure begins to cater for future public demand.
- 3.5 The final report was presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 3rd September and are to be presented to Cabinet on the 24th September 2019.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The Working Group established the terms of reference as follows:-

"The role of the Working Group is to consider the development of the infrastructure to support Low Carbon Vehicles that will improve the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf. In its considerations, the Scrutiny Working Group will apply the then draft 'Future Generations Framework' for Scrutiny. In particular, the Group will apply the Sustainable Development principle of the Act through the five ways of working, namely, Integration, Collaboration, Long Term thinking, Involvement and Prevention.

As part of its considerations, the Group will analyse and evaluate the development of infrastructure for LCVs throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf which will inform the development of the Council's own fleet efficiency through the adoption of LCV technologies".

- 4.2 The Scrutiny Working Group met on three occasions. At the inaugural meeting, Members received refresher information on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that would support their understanding of the Act and its application to the work of the Group in its consideration. The aim was to consider the development of infrastructure to support low carbon vehicle

(LCV)/ultra-low emission ownership across the County Borough through the lens of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

- 4.3 As part of its review, as well as considering the Council's current and future provision in respect of the LCV infrastructure and plans involving the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, the Scrutiny Working Group also invited partners to discuss their work plans and the potential for the Council to collaborate with others to maximise the benefit to residents and communities. The partners that were able to attend the meeting were Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales. The Group also considered relevant information from a number of sources/ organisations, including Centre of Excellence for Low Carbon and Fuel Cell technologies, '[cenex](#)', [Urban Foresight](#), [Welsh Government](#), Natural Resources Wales, South Wales Police and Cwm Taf UHB.

5. **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 The information, policy context and support for reducing carbon emissions and the use of Low Carbon Vehicles at global, UK and Wales levels is moving quickly and it has been a challenge to keep abreast of these developments
- 5.2 As part of its research, the Group was made aware of relevant UK, and Welsh policies as well as progress of other public bodies in putting in place Low Carbon infrastructure including:

UK Government Ambition to see at least 50% of new cars and 40% new van sales at 40% Ultra Low Emission by 2030 with all cars and vans achieving zero emissions by 2050

- 5.3 At an all Wales level, in October 2018 a [written statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport](#) set out in respect of Welsh Government funding to support including the deployment of a £2 million funding to help create a publicly accessible national network of rapid charging points and to "explore the feasibility extending the deployment of the funding to charging points at park and ride facilities and taxi ranks to encourage and benefit public transport use through a national network delivered through a national concession model". The Minister's stated intention is that Transport for Wales (TfW) will procure and oversee the concession. This statement was reinforced by the Cabinet Secretary on [7th February 2019](#) at an event aimed at motivating public sectors to speed up the transition to a low carbon and low emission transport system in Wales.
- 5.4 Welsh Government has since published its report, [Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales 2019](#) which details how Wales will meet its 2016-2020 carbon budget. Wales is committed to an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. The report outlines how it will achieve this target as well as the interim targets of a 27% reduction by 2020; a 45% reduction by 2030; and a 67% reduction by 2040. In order to reach these targets Welsh Government is looking at a number of innovative approaches to reduce its emissions and is promoting other renewable energy developments such as wind and solar as well as low emission transport. The uptake in electric vehicles and other low carbon vehicles will drive

this forward and WG is setting in place a plan for '*public charging infrastructure to at least meet the demand created by 60% of new sales for cars and vans being electric vehicles by 2030 (around 35% Plug in Hybrid and 25% Battery electric*'.

- 5.5 More locally, we have seen the progress by other local authorities, such as [Caerphilly County Borough](#) and Cardiff City Councils which have progressed their individual strategies for electric vehicles and low emission transport to include opportunities for plug-in vehicles, including public transport as well as infrastructure, renewable technologies and supporting innovation. The Group's research also indicated that there is also significant work being undertaken by public sector partners such as South Wales Fire & Rescue which is investigating the infrastructure of electric charging points across the Regions i.e. Caerphilly and Gwent in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales (NRW). South Wales Police and Cwm Taf UHB are also considering their respective need and plans
- 5.6 NRW is pursuing its own 'Carbon Positive Project' by introducing ultra-low emission vehicles and charging infrastructure into its fleet and supporting visitors to travel to sites sustainably. NRW has also commissioned 'Cenex' to undertake a review of the carbon emissions resulting from the NRW fleet and to identify areas where emissions could be reduced ¹
- 5.7 The Working Group was keen to pursue any joint benefits arising from a wider partnership approach to the development of the EV infrastructure in RCT particularly through the Cwm Taf PSB, the Automotive Sector, Infrastructure Owners and Energy Companies. It was agreed that alignment between partners must be achieved in order to develop an overarching strategy to increase the use of EVs.
- 5.8 The Working Group also identified opportunities for Rhondda Cynon Taf to progress its LCV Strategy through City Deal and Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority. The Group welcomed the implementation of a modern transport hub and station quarter in Porth which will improve connectivity in the town centre and surrounding areas and will include a seven bay bus exchange, taxi rank, cycle stores, park and ride and train station links. Electric charge points will be included within any future proposal implemented such as Llys Cadwyn in Pontypridd.
- 5.9 According to Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales the growth in ownership of ultra-low emission vehicles in Wales currently lags behind other parts of the UK. With any new technology, uptake is initially slow when there is minimal support infrastructure in place. The changes arising from the Low Carbon Wales report, planning regulations and the increasing pressure from the Climate Change Committee are among the catalysts that are creating increased interest in Low Carbon Transport solutions, including Low Carbon Vehicles.

¹<https://cdn.naturalresources.wales/media/687416/eng-evidence-report-278-nrw-carbon-positive-project-nrw-strategic-fleet.pdf>

5.10 Cardiff Capital Region commissioned ‘Cenex’² to assess the potential impact of zero emission capable vehicles on the recharging infrastructure and energy requirements at 11 proposed Metro sites located across South East Wales. Among other things, the findings indicated that, the plug-in car uptake in RCT is predicted to be the following by:-

2020		2025		2030	
PiVs (% of all cars)	All cars	PiVs (% of all cars)	All cars	PiVs (% of all cars)	All cars
367 (0.3%)	116,508	2,255 (1.8%)	125,851	7,559 (5.6%)	135,193

(PiVs – Plug In Electric Vehicles)

5.11 The growth in electric car ownership and the need to meet UK and Welsh Carbon reduction targets supports the need for a charging infrastructure to be in place across RCT that will help meet the energy needs arising from growth in the number of electric cars in the area by 2030. The Council can have huge influence on the way its citizens travel and can also support people to make lower carbon travel choices. Currently, there are limited charging points in RCT. Of the points in place, not all are publicly available. The number of points that are available is low in comparison with neighbouring councils Members felt that by increasing the provision of publicly available charging points that are situated in visible, accessible and reliable locations with minimal route diversions to access them would be of benefit to existing EV users and once in place are likely to support residents to make choices in favour of purchasing Electric Vehicles and give visitors from outside RCT the assurance that charging facilities are available

5.12 The Working Group agreed that positioning infrastructure in destination locations would also encourage visitors from outside the area. This could include more rural locations which could enable people to travel further without ‘range’ anxiety. Taxi ranks were also identified by the Working Group as key to progressing the opportunities for infrastructure development in the short term which could be shared by other users as the network expands.

5.13 The provision of publicly available charging points may also influence those people living in terraced homes, where it would be difficult and unsafe for them to charge Electric Vehicles from home and purchase a vehicle where they have no means of installing an on-road charger. The lack of infrastructure is a key

² <https://www.cardiffcapitalregion.wales/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/appendix-3-cardiff-metro-infrastructure-review-cenex.pdf>

barrier to deployment of alternative vehicles which can reduce emissions and improve air quality.

- 5.14 To assist home charging, a new policy on ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) requires non-residential developments to have charging points in at least 10% of the spaces available. This is the first national policy of its kind in the [UK](#). The new rule is designed to help accelerate the uptake of electric cars by making it easier for electric car owners to recharge the vehicle's battery overnight, at home. It is part of the UK government's wider "[Road to Zero](#)" policy, which is designed to reduce new car emissions to "effectively zero" by 2040.
- 5.15 The Working Group recognised that there could be benefits to the early inclusion of electric vehicles within the Council's own fleet. This could be facilitated as part of fleet renewal processes, to analyse and identify opportunities for using low carbon vehicles as part of day to day operations without hampering operational performance or increasing costs. This would also enable the Council to gain a greater understanding of the best use and of Electric Vehicles. Research identified that a number of grants were available to support the purchase of Electric Vehicles including from the UK Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV). There is scope for further research to maximise any grant funding opportunities to reduce costs.
- 5.16 The infrastructure could include the installation of a number of charging points, which could be a mix of rapid-charge, taking roughly half an hour to charge and fast-charge, which take three to four hours. As a major employer within RCT, the Council has significant reach to residents within the community. Staff could be encouraged to purchase electric cars through a range of Staff Incentive packages. Where drivers are unable to charge at home, charging at their workplace may help to influence their purchase decision as they would have access to charging so that they could enjoy the benefits of an electric car. Between the morning and evening rush hours, most cars are not used and are parked in the office car park. This would provide the perfect opportunity to plug in and top-up the charge. This makes using an electric car for work a very viable and sensible proposition all-round, alongside other more sustainable modes of transport.
- 5.17 The Working Group acknowledged that a move towards a low carbon future, which was set out in the Welsh Government strategy for a [Low Carbon Wales](#), and published during the course of the Group's work would provide a number of community benefits including significant health benefits. Wales has some of the worst air quality in the UK³ and there are areas in Wales such as Cardiff and Port Talbot that have higher PM10 levels than some larger cities such as Birmingham and London. The primary source of pollutants arise from road transport and air pollution contributes to around [2,000 deaths per year in Wales](#) (6% of total deaths).
- 5.18 [Welsh Government](#) is looking to the public sector for an '*early leadership role in driving forward a low carbon future*' by taking a '*proactive approach to considering and implementing opportunities to reduce emissions from their*

³ <http://www.assembly.wales/Research%20Documents/18-009/18-009-Web-English.pdf>

transport activities'. Recently, the Council published its own response to [Net Zero – The Committee on Climate Change](#) in which it has committed to match the ambitions of the UK100 Agreement through pledging to achieve 100% clean energy across Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's full range of functions by 2050. More specifically the Council supports the *'installation of infrastructure to fuel zero emission vehicles and encouraging residents to opt to purchase electric vehicles by offering free car parking and use of bus lanes'*. The shift to electric vehicles and providing the most accessible refuelling infrastructure will play a part in decarbonising the road network and improve air quality, which brings with it many benefits such as long term positive effects on access to employment for deprived areas and health.

5.19 The Working Group firmly believe that as the profile of Low Carbon Vehicles together with the impetus of other Low Carbon solutions to meet Carbon reduction is raised the Council has a key role to play by:-

- Reducing Carbon in its own fleet through the use of LCVs with appropriate infrastructure and encouraging Elected Members and staff to consider and take advantage of LCV solutions and facilitating this through the provision of charging points in council offices;
- Encouraging residents to consider and take advantage of LCV solutions and facilitating this through the provision of charging points in key locations;
- Working with partners to align the provision of infrastructure and widen the access to charging for all as well as enabling visitors to key RCT destinations to access charging facilities

5.20 The developing technology and government plans for fossil fuel engines and low carbon solutions to the use of energy in households mean this agenda is developing at a pace. The Council will need to keep abreast of these developments to ensure it fulfils its community leadership role.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been formed as a result of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Working Group tasked with progressing the Notice of Motion in respect of developing the electric vehicle infrastructure across RCT. Many are short term and immediate actions, which can be implemented others are longer term developments for progressing the strategy for infrastructure.

These recommendations were supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 3rd September and endorsed by Cabinet on the 11th September 2019.

6.1 Recommendation 1

'The Council should seek to enhance the availability and accessibility of public access EV charging in the short term at key Council locations such as leisure centres and tourist destinations.

6.2 Recommendation 2

'The Council should consider steps to facilitate infrastructure to support the predicted increase in electric vehicle usage and consider how these steps might encourage residents across all areas of RCT to opt to purchase an electric vehicle. As part of this the Council should involve residents and collaborate with businesses and the wider public sector in the development of these proposals. The Council should also consider the commercial opportunities available to it.'

6.3 Recommendation 3

'The Council should consider developing supplementary planning guidance to ensure that fast-charging infrastructure can be supported both in residential and non-residential development. Looking to the future, the Council should consider now, how wider urban design could complement the evolution to electrified transport and wider changes in mobility and transport behaviour in the longer term. The Council should avoid considering EV infrastructure as a single issue, but instead should take an integrated approach by considering how energy generation and supply to support the wider reduction of carbon footprint. The Scrutiny Working Group believes a proactive approach could prevent any future challenges from the outset and prevent the Council from being penalised financially should strict financial penalties for higher emission vehicles be introduced'

6.4 Recommendation 4

'As part of future fleet renewal, the Council should seek where possible to replace current petrol or diesel vehicles, with Electric Vehicles. Where range of such vehicles may currently cause operational issues, the Council should consider hybrid/mild-hybrid options or the latest technology petrol/diesel options which meet or exceed Euro 6. The Working Group believes that this could be done via a trial of electric/hybrid electric vehicles within an appropriate Council Service such as Meals on Wheels to see how it can be viable and cost effective for the Council going forward. As a result of the pace of improvement in Electric Vehicle range, the Council should continuously review opportunities in the medium to longer term to consciously opt, where possible for electric/hybrid electric options. Such a commitment should be based also upon the potential revenue savings in fleet running costs.

6.5 Recommendation 5

'The Working Group believes that a wider partnership approach to the development of EV infrastructure could reduce some of the operational challenges presented by current EV-range limits. The Group also felt there was huge potential in a collaborative regional approach more broadly across the Capital Region'

6.6 Recommendation 6

'As technology is changing, the Council should begin now to consider how it responds to a future shift to electric vehicles between now and the UK Government

deadline for combustion engine production, not just at a strategic community leadership level. The Council should consider how it can encourage local vocational providers to respond to the shift in the emerging technology and develop relevant courses which will advance the mechanical skills required to maintain and service electric vehicles.

6.7 Recommendation 7

'The Council should consider placing an onus upon its supply chain to support an EV or LCV approach, in areas such as Home to School Transport and Taxi licences'.

6.8 Recommendation 8

'The Working Group believes the Council should call upon the Welsh Government to take a more proactive approach in facilitating EV infrastructure to ensure that Wales leads from the front and is in the best position to secure the potential economic opportunities. The Group also believed that the Council should call upon the UK Government to take more radical steps in respect of incentivising a shift to electric vehicles, learning from the example set by Scandinavian countries'.

6.9 Recommendation 9

The Working Group identified the Welsh National Eisteddfod (to be hosted by RCT in 2022) as a visitor attraction which would benefit from having the appropriate electric charging infrastructure in place to supply visitors for the duration of the event. The Working Group believes that the Council should investigate the implementation of the appropriate (mobile) infrastructure in order to demonstrate its commitment to the local environment, help cater for visitor's charging needs and exhibit leadership in an emerging industry.

6.10 Recommendation 10

'The Working Group also urges the Council to recognise that planning effectively now is key for the longer term sustainability of the local economy'.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 No equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this report, however, creating sustainable communities, transport and long term employment opportunities is of benefit to all RCT residents regardless of background.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation was undertaken with Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and consideration was given to responses provided by PSB Partners / Local Authorities. However the Working Group acknowledged the need to take forward further involvement with Stakeholders in any future developments.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report but detailed consideration of the capital and revenue implications will be required in order to support a preferred strategy. However there is scope to bid for and maximise grant funding.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

11. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE AND NATIONAL AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT

- 11.1 Supporting the development of Infrastructure for Low Carbon Vehicles will allow the Council to meet its stated objective of being more energy efficient. The recommendations contained within this report will enable the council to maximise its contributions to the seven national Well-being Goals.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The Working Group was tasked with considering the development of the infrastructure to support low carbon vehicles that will improve the Economic, Social and Environmental and Cultural well-being of the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Group concluded that there was currently insufficient infrastructure in place to support LCV and that more work needs to be undertaken to identify a way forward. This work needs to be aligned with the Council's response to Net Zero: The Committee on Climate Change.
