



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

28TH JANUARY 2020

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET'S CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPION (COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group of proposed approaches to resident/community engagement and communication. This includes businesses and representatives from national and local environmental groups to raise awareness of the importance of behavioural change in and encourage in respect of Climate Change, encourage participation at a community level and promote the proactive work of the Council and community groups.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group:

- 2.1 Consider the information contained in the report and the proposed engagement approach subject to any amendments and support the proposed areas of focus:
- A) Communications & Social Media activity
 - B) Developing a behavioural change campaign
 - C) Facilitating Involvement
 - D) Engaging future generations
- 2.3 Agree for officers to work in partnership with key environmental stakeholders and groups to develop this approach going forward, and seek their engagement in specific communications and engagement activity; and
- 2.3 Agree to receive updates on progress at future meetings.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the work of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group is driven by the involvement of all key stakeholders, raising awareness of best practice and ultimately encouraging residents and communities to change their behaviour. To support this work, the Council has an important role to play in leading by example.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council, through the development of a new Corporate Plan, is committed to becoming a Carbon Neutral organisation by 2030 and to work with residents and businesses within the Borough to ensure the whole County Borough is Carbon Neutral as close as possible to the 2030 target.
- 4.2 The Cabinet Steering Group has been established to ensure an Authority-wide approach to issues of Climate Change and the Council becoming a carbon neutral organisation.

The terms of reference of the group state that the Group will;

- *Provide the opportunity for persons, interested parties, and groups who live in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council the ability to engage in the wider response of the community to Climate Change;*

- 4.3 In order to achieve its ambitious 2030 target requires the Council to work with communities and groups such as, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and other local environmental groups to help to engage residents and businesses in ways that will encourage them to adapt and change their behaviour.
- 4.4 The Council has already started working with the Council's Youth Council on the matter of climate change. These discussions have already indicated the priority placed upon tackling climate change by young people and the leading role they wish to play. This will be further supported by inviting school eco committees to get involved.
- 4.5 This report outlines an approach to community engagement that will help the Council to deliver the necessary actions to respond to the challenge of Climate Change and in doing so, support businesses, communities and residents to reduce their environmental impact and so the Carbon Footprint of the County Borough.

5. **PROPOSED APPROACH**

- 5.1 The Council already undertakes a number of effective engagement approaches, which utilises a variety of communication channels and methods. It is proposed that the Council utilises these approaches, but also complements them with a range of specific campaigns, engagement events and stakeholder involvement to effectively support and persuade the participation necessary from residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf to initiate in the medium to longer term, the appropriate changes in their current behaviour.
- 5.2 It is proposed to involve as wide a range of stakeholders, as possible, in the development of these proposals but also the delivery of the wider conversation. To achieve this the first step will be to identify the key stakeholders and identify the most appropriate engagement methods to employ. **The contribution of the Steering Group's community members is sought to support this.**
- 5.3 The development of future approaches will need to consider how best we can encourage the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf to take a personal lead in reducing their carbon footprint.
- 5.4 It will need to consider how the Council can work with national and local environmental groups to engage residents and businesses to adapt and change. ***Approaches might include:***

5.5 **Communications & Social Media activity**

Through the development of a dedicated communication plan the Council would connect communications activity with key milestones and delivery of projects currently being considered.

- 5.6 The Council proactively promotes services which are contributing to the positive progress already undertaken by the Council to reduce its carbon footprint. However, it is evident from the contributions of Steering Group Members that this positive progress is not reaching individuals and groups who are already championing change and making an impact at a local level.
- 5.7 In order to raise awareness and enable behavioural change, the Council's social media and marketing expertise would be used to develop targeted campaigns for specific audiences, as well as more general awareness raising of the impact of Climate Change events to RCT residents and businesses. **Key actions will include:**

- *Communicating how the Council is changing how it operates and delivers services and provide to empower residents to take the lead from our proactive lead;*
- *Playing the leading role in support the Council's behavioural change campaign;*
- *Developing a dedicated #hashtagRCTClimateChange;*
- *Milestone days to encourage greater dialogue about Climate Change;*
- *Implementing 'Did you know'? campaigns;*
- *Wider support for engagement events and activities;*
- *Promoting good work already taking place at a local level; and*
- *Connecting with national groups who support behavioural change.*

5.8 Communicating behavioural change

Social Marketing: Definition

Social marketing is designed to create social change, not to directly benefit a brand. Using traditional marketing techniques, it raises awareness of a given problem or cause, and aims to convince an audience to change their behaviours.

Social marketing “promotes” a behaviour or lifestyle that benefits society, in order to create the desired change. This benefit to the public good is always the primary focus. And instead of showing how a matter is better than competing issues, social marketing “competes” against undesirable thoughts, behaviours, or actions.

Well-executed social marketing captures attention, and spreads awareness about a social issue, through creativity and emotion. Most importantly, it presents a compelling, simple way to make the world better, and makes this beneficial behaviour more desirable than any “competing” behaviour. Through these elements, social marketing is able to successfully “promote” a beneficial behaviour.

5.9 The Council has a strong track record in delivering behavioural change campaigns, e.g. communications activities have proactively supported the Council’s recycling improvements and the implementation of service change.

5.10 It is proposed that a behaviour change marketing campaign to include story board visuals, digital content, social media messaging be developed for comment and feedback from the Steering Group.

5.11 More generally, a range of social media channels can be used to communicate the Climate Change agenda and the support of stakeholders will be key to sign post to social media discussions, already taking place.

5.12 Below are examples of campaigns already undertaken by the Council, which have supported positive recycling changes and are supporting the profile of issues such as water re-fill stations.

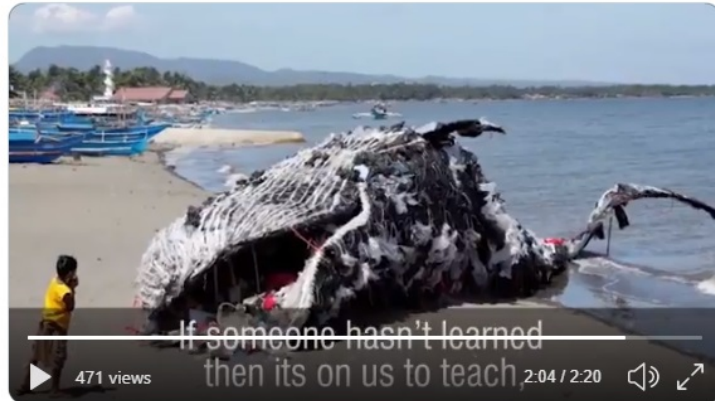




RCT Council ✓
@RCTCouncil

This rap, written for the Council by our very own Treorchy lad Josh, that was launched @TreorchyComp today says it all....Think about the earth - Recycling it's in our own hands! @Recycle4Wales #EveryonesDoingIT #StopThinkRecycle socsi.in/eCpLo

socsi.in/plbV9



3:02 PM · Sep 23, 2019 · Orlo



RCT Council ✓
@RCTCouncil

Gwauncelyn Primary School is Doing IT by helping promote a new scheme, encouraging schools to ask pupils to use refillable water bottles & refill on the go - Recycling, it's in our own hands! #EveryonesDoingIT #StopThinkRecycle socsi.in/Pqg18 #RecycleWeek @Recycle4Wales



5:31 PM · Sep 25, 2019 · Orlo



5.13 Developing a conversation

It is intended that the Council's engagement approach on this matter will be 'conversational' from the outset, seeking to build understanding first, which in turn will support subsequent engagement and participation at a local level.

It is proposed that as well as holding an ongoing conversation with residents and communities about Climate Change, they will be invited and encouraged to participate in focussed discussions on the Council's specific climate change initiatives as they arise, e.g. community tree planting, supporting initiatives to eliminate single use plastics and car free days.

The conversation will be underpinned by a range of communications and engagement activities.

- 5.14 It is proposed that the conversations will be underpinned by a **Central Climate Change** web portal to which all residents and stakeholders can be signposted. An interim portal will be put in place within a month, which will contain information that promotes and raises awareness of current projects, best practice and any case studies from across RCT as well as national and global events.

It is suggested that the development of this interim site be used as one of the mechanisms to engage young people. Young people's representatives could be invited to contribute ideas for its design and content and also to help develop an RCT Climate Change brand.

5.15 By linking to national bodies' websites and relevant Welsh Government Initiatives, the wider opportunities for the public to realise their personal responsibilities and the changes they can make will be amplified.

5.16 Wider web content can also be used to host online discussion forums or message boards and also host information about the Climate Change Steering Group, engagement activities, milestones and successes.

5.17 Involvement

As well as providing information about the Council's approach to Climate Change and associated issues, we will need to ask people what their Climate priorities are; Is the Council taking the right approach? What else could the Council be doing?

5.18 As well as the involvement of Environmental Groups, an ongoing conversation will need to progress with the following groups/individuals;

- *Generally all residents Young people e.g. through [The Rhondda Cynon Taf Youth Forum](#) and through schools and Youth Groups*
- *Partner organisations through the PSB*
- *Older People e.g. through the ['Fiftyplus' Older People's Forum](#)*
- *The RCT Disability Forum*
- *[The Council's Citizens' Panel](#)*
- *[Local Partnerships and Communities Together 'PACT' meetings Health Forums](#)*
- *Service User Groups e.g. Transport, [Carers](#)*
- *[Community/Voluntary groups](#)*
- *Welsh Language Groups*
- *Community and Town Councils*
- *Councillors, MPs, AMs*
- *Businesses*
- *Staff*

5.19 The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee is currently developing an [Involvement Strategy](#) to ensure all services prioritise engagement with communities and service users as part of their day-to-day approach to service delivery. Subject to agreement by the Council's Cabinet, this document will play a role in supporting the engagement activity of the Climate Change Steering Group.

5.20 The Council's Community Council Liaison Committee is already scheduled to consider this matter at its first meeting in 2020. The participation of community engagement will be key and should seek to support future projects at a local level.

5.21 The way in which the groups or individuals will be involved and the approach taken will be dependent on subject. An engagement Plan will be developed with the community representatives of the Steering Group.

This could include:

- Face to face engagement events;
- Road show events to raise awareness;
- Focus group events which lead to participation in a project;
- Work with community groups to facilitate conversations and links to develop future projects; and
- 'Cafe style' events to sign-post to future information.

5.22 Face to face engagement events could be used across the Borough to raise awareness and promote behavioural change with our residents.

5.23 The Council facilitates positive engagement by undertaking these events in town centres, at Council venues or other venues in the community which have a connection to the subject matter, or have a cross spectrum of residents in attendance.

5.24 Any future approach will need to include engagement at a community level, to support project delivery in areas such tree planting and improved recycling performance as examples.

5.25 Through the knowledge gained by working with stakeholders and community groups, there will be the opportunity to utilise targeted events to focus on encouraging wider participation in specific areas of behavioural change – car sharing might be an example.

5.26 The potential engagement opportunities referenced will feed into the wider planned communications activities.

5.27 As community leaders, the wider engagement and involvement of all elected members is crucially important to the effective engagement of communities across all of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

5.28 Seeking the engagement of elected members in leading project delivery and those conversations with residents will make a positive difference and enhance progress. Examples such as the Rhyd-cycle and Green Village initiative led by members demonstrates the positive lead Councillors will play.

5.29 Involving Future Generations

The Council's Climate Change Champion has already requested that the Council's Youth Forums are involved and are able to advise and support the work of the Steering Group. There are a number of Youth Forums across RCT that cater for 11-25 year olds.

5.30 One of the ways of facilitating this will be through the sharing of the Steering Group's [work programme](#) through the Council's structured youth forum arrangements.

5.31 The Cabinet Office has already undertaken discussions with colleagues in the Council's Youth Engagement & Participation Service to facilitate engagement with young people who are engaged more widely with the Council's Youth Services.

5.32 To achieve this, the Council will work closely with RCT schools and our youth services to develop such approaches with young people. Following this dialogue, proposals will be developed to engage a larger audience of young people. This work will need to complement schools' work as part of their own eco committees and also the [Eco-schools programme organised by Keep Wales Tidy](#).

6. NEXT STEPS

Key to delivering the intended approach will be to ensure that individuals and groups who are taking a proactive role already in our communities connect their conversations into the work of the Council.

- Continue to promote the positive progress the Council is making;
- Connect communication messages with current online conversations; and residents taking a proactive interest in the subject of climate change;
- To bring Steering Group members and key stakeholders together to consider how networks can be utilised to begin engagement;
- Develop marketing options to deliver the necessary behavioural change required;
- Develop a calendar of events to begin our conversations;
- Engage with local and national environmental campaigns;
- Develop strategic, digital, web and social media; and
- Target messaging to Council employees.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The engagement approach will provide opportunities for a diverse group of residents and stakeholders to get involved, providing a range of methods including online, accessible events and specific engagement for targeted groups, such as young people, older people and the Council's Disability Forum.

8. RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

- 8.1 The recommendations outlined in the report seek to develop an approach to Communication, Engagement and Involvement that will inform a plan to mitigate the effects of Climate Change in Rhondda Cynon Taf and that will encourage everyone that lives, works and visits Rhondda Cynon Taf to change their behaviour

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 There are no financial implications directly aligned to this report.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

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

- 11.1 The Council has committed to becoming a Carbon Neutral organisation by 2030 and to work with residents and businesses within the Borough to ensure the whole County Borough is Carbon Neutral as close as possible to the 2030 target. This supports the priorities of the Council's current Corporate Plan as well as the proposals which are the subject of engagement in the new Corporate Plan.
- 11.2 This work is fully reflecting the Sustainable Development principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and will contribute to all seven National Goals, with more immediate direct contributions to a Globally Responsible Wales, a more Resilient Wales, a Healthy Wales and a Wales of Cohesive Communities.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The report outlines a proposed approach to resident engagement and communication in respect of climate change, working with a wide range of stakeholders to raise awareness of and encourage positive behavioural change towards the environment in RCT.

12.2 The overall aim is to provide the opportunity for persons, interested parties, and groups who live in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council the ability to engage in the wider response of the community to climate change.