



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

14TH JUNE 2021

**DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY (2021-2025) CONSULTATION
RESPONSES**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH 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 outline the findings from the recent consultation on the Council's Draft Climate Change Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet Steering Group:

- 2.1 Note and consider the feedback received on the Draft Council Tackling Climate Change Strategy.
- 2.2 Request that Officers use the feedback to inform the development of the final Climate Change Strategy.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the work of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group works towards the Council's aim of becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In March 2021, the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group received a report that provided the opportunity to consider the Draft Council Tackling Climate Change Strategy and agreed to engage and consult



with residents and businesses on the Council's response to Climate Change.

4.2 The Council's draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy seeks to set the overall direction for the Council over the coming five years, describing its vision, purpose and ambition as local authority in respect of the Council's carbon footprint and the carbon footprint for the County Borough.

4.3 The Council's proposed vision is:

By 2030

- Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will be carbon neutral;
- The whole County Borough will be as close as possible to carbon neutral;
- Our work with partners will have contributed to reducing carbon emissions across the County Borough by *****.

4.4 In our Corporate Plan 2020-24, [Making A Difference](#), the Council acknowledged that delivering our Climate Change commitment is our greatest challenge. In our plan we committed to delivering three main priorities, all of which will contribute to and benefit from tackling climate change:

- Ensuring **People**: *are independent, healthy and successful*;
- Creating **Places**: *where people are proud to live, work and play*;
- Enabling **Prosperity**: *creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.*

4.5 Our Climate Commitments underpin each of our priorities. These commitments have been developed using the best information available at a time of significant and competing local, regional, national and global priorities with new and fast-moving opportunities being presented by governments and businesses alike.

4.6 No single plan can set out the many ways in which we are working to reduce carbon emissions in order to achieve our commitments in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Draft Climate Change Strategy is a framework to guide us and shape what we do to reduce both the Council's carbon footprint and that of the County Borough.

4.7 The Draft Strategy has been subject to a wide-ranging consultation, as part of a new ongoing [Climate Conversation](#).



5. THE CLIMATE CHANGE CONVERSATION

- 5.1 The Climate Change Strategy engagement was branded as [“Let’s Talk Climate Change RCT”](#) and used a new online engagement platform, which hosted key consultation documents, including the strategy itself, a plain English version of the strategy and other relevant links. The methods of engagement on the site included an online survey, a number of short polls, the ability to map localised comments, a stories box and a section where users are invited to provide their ideas on a certain topic (stories).
- 5.2 A “Think Climate” YouTube video was used to outline and promote the consultation - <https://youtu.be/lyg5c4XABdk>
- 5.3 The online tools and information were promoted through all social media channels, print media and the Council’s corporate website. A number of emails/letters were sent to a range of stakeholders.
- 5.4 The Council’s social media team linked to a number of campaigns that ran through the consultation period, including, Earth Day, National Gardening Week, Water Saving Week and National Children’s Walk to School Week.
- 5.5 Staff were provided with the main tools on the site to provide feedback, as well as a separate survey, which asked them if they had ideas about how we can do more to tackle Climate Change within any of our Council services.
- 5.6 Over 1000 businesses across RCT were emailed a link to the consultation, from the Council databases and also directly from the BIDs in Pontypridd, Treorchy and Aberdare.
- 5.7 All primary and secondary schools were emailed the consultation links and asked to share with parents and children through the school communication channels. In addition, we developed a young persons’ approach using Instagram, and promoted through the WICID website, supported by the Council’s Youth Engagement and Participation team and our schools.
- 5.8 We held a number of Online engagement sessions with the Older Person’s Advisory Group, the Community Council Liaison Committee and a Youth Forum.

- 5.9 The Council provided a number of alternatives to online engagement, as it is important to continue to consider hard to reach groups, those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods. This included a telephone consultation option working with the Council's Contact Centre, paper surveys and information available on request and a consultation freepost address for postal responses.
- 5.10 In addition to a specific consultation on the Draft Climate Change Strategy, we have also started to develop an ongoing Climate Change conversation. The aim is to work with services and partners to develop appropriate engagement for individual climate change projects based on the detailed action plans that underpin the climate change strategy.
- 5.11 As part of the conversation we launched a second project in April to gain views to inform a future RCT Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging and Infrastructure Strategy. The consultation ran alongside the overall consultation on the draft climate change strategy. This is the first of many climate change conversations that will take place and we will work with service managers to assist them with any engagement requirements over the next year.

6 KEY FINDINGS

- 6.1 The following provides a summary of the main findings from the Let's Talk Climate Change RCT consultation.
- 76% of respondents to the survey agreed that the Council's work to tackle Climate Change should be set out in one plan.
 - 90% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PLACE** commitments. The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions.

%	Yes	No	Don't know
Using wind, water, waste and energy from the sun to generate clean energy that we can use in local buildings and homes	94.9	2.9	2.3
Using and recycling more of the waste we collect	94.9	1.7	3.4
Helping people to get about more easily using more buses, trains and bikes	88.0	6.9	5.1



Making sure that traffic fumes from traffic are kept as low as possible	90.9	5.1	4.0
Helping put in charging points to make it easier for people with electric cars to use	87.9	6.4	5.8
Using natural ways to help stop flooding, wildfires and keep carbon in the ground	97.7	0.0	2.3
Helping more people to get together to enjoy and protect nature and wildlife across RCT	93.7	2.9	3.4

- 90% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PROSPERITY** commitments. The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions.

%	Yes	No	Don't know
Making sure that our plans that set out how and where we build do not add further carbon emissions into the air and protect the high and hilly land across the County Borough	92.0	2.9	5.1
Helping people to use less energy in their homes	96.0	1.7	2.3
Helping to make sure new houses are not built in places that haven't already been built on and people can get to them without a car	82.9	7.4	9.7
Helping to make sure that new houses and commercial buildings can make and store their own energy and have charging points for electric cars	93.1	1.1	5.7
Helping people and landlords to make changes to homes so they use less and greener energy	94.3	1.7	4.0
Encouraging and helping local businesses to find ways to waste less, reduce pollution and protect the environment	98.3	1.1	0.6
Helping local businesses to find products less harmful to nature locally	94.9	1.1	4.0
Finding ways to buy more of what the Council's services need locally	89.7	4.0	6.3
Planting trees and shrubs in town centres	88.0	5.1	6.9
Helping children and young people in our schools to understand more about nature and climate	93.7	2.9	3.4
Helping people of all ages to train or retrain for new skills so that they can find jobs and create changes in companies that will help to protect the planet	87.4	2.9	9.7



- 87% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PEOPLE** commitments. The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions.

%	Yes	No	Don't know
Providing information that will help people to make choices in their lives that can help put less carbon in the air. For example, wasting less, recycling more, driving less, driving more slowly and not running the engine when the car is stopped	82.3	9.7	8.0
Encouraging and helping people to make their homes more energy efficient	98.3	0.6	1.1
Making space in Ynysangharad Park where people can learn about local nature, practice new skills and take part in activities that will help the climate and grow fresh vegetables for local foodbanks	76.6	10.9	12.6
Encouraging more people to join with others to enjoy and help nature	84.6	5.1	10.3
Offering land to people and groups so that they can grow their own fruit and vegetables and to share them with others	91.4	4.0	4.6
Giving more vegetarian meal choices to children and young people in schools and people who receive Meals on Wheels	72.0	16.0	12.0

- 56% of respondents thought that the Climate Commitments would help the Council to meet its carbon reduction targets.
- The following are the overarching, main themes taken from the open responses, which were identified as priorities by respondents;
 - Electric Vehicles/charging
 - Housing and Renewable energy
 - Active Travel/alternatives to the car/working from home
 - Biodiversity, wildflowers and tree planting
 - Education/projects in schools
 - General communication and education of the public



- Reducing Waste/recycling
 - Businesses/local trade
 - Vegetarian and Plant based meals
- 81.9% of respondents felt that they didn't have enough information about the impact of climate change.
 - 100% of respondents said they were very concerned or concerned about the impact of Climate Change in their local area.
- 6.2 Overall, 392 people took part in the engagement on the Climate Change Strategy, with 220 people engaged directly in the engagement via the Let's Talk Climate Change engagement tool. 349 were informed (viewed documents and multiple pages) and 608 were aware (visited the site).

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. An Equality Impact Assessment is not required with regard to this report.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy has been subject to a comprehensive public consultation over the two months to 31 May 2021.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

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

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.
- 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 In March 2021, the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group agreed to engage and consult with residents and businesses on the Council's response to Climate Change.
- 12.2 A consultation was undertaken in April and May 2021 and the findings show that the majority of respondents are in support of the draft Climate Change Strategy and the priorities within.
- 12.3 The attached report provides a summary of the findings. A wide range of comments were received to inform the final Strategy, all of which will be circulated to the responsible Officers, so that as much feedback as possible can be fed into the process.
- 12.4 The Consultation Team will continue to develop an ongoing Climate Change conversation, working with the Steering Group, Council services and partners to develop appropriate engagement for individual climate change projects, based on the detailed action plans that underpin the final Climate Change Strategy.



APPENDIX – Consultation Report