



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021-2022**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
15 JUNE 2021**

**PRE-SCRUTINY OF THE DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY (2021-  
2025) CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

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

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to comment on the consultation responses received from the Climate Change Strategy engagement held during April and May 2021.
- 1.2 The responses from the consultation exercise will inform the Council's Draft Climate Change Strategy 2021-2025.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Form a view on the findings from the recent consultation on the Council's Draft Climate Change Strategy, as set out in the report; and
- 2.2 Provide comments/observations and/or recommendations to the Council's Cabinet in advance of its meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To ensure the Overview & Scrutiny has early opportunity to comment on the findings of the recent wide-ranging consultation exercise which will contribute to the Council's draft Climate Change Strategy 2021-2025.

#### 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 the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24, [Making A Difference](#), the Council acknowledged that delivering its Climate Change commitment is its greatest challenge. The Council is 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 The Climate Commitments underpin each of the 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 the Council is working to reduce carbon emissions in order to achieve the commitments in

Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Draft Climate Change Strategy is a framework to guide and shape what it does to reduce both its 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, a young persons' approach was developed by using Instagram, and promoted through the WICID website, supported by the Council's Youth Engagement and Participation team and schools.

- 5.8 A number of Online engagement sessions were held 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, an ongoing Climate Change conversation was also developed. 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 a second project was launched 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 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. A consultation was undertaken in April and May 2021 and the findings are enclosed.
- 12.2 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee, in line with its Terms of Reference, has the opportunity to form a view on the findings from the consultation exercise, the feedback from which will be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet to be held on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

## **APPENDIX – Consultation Report**



Dewch i  
siarad RhCT  
Let's talk  
RCT

Rhondda Cynon Taf

**Hinsawdd  
Ystyriol**

**Think  
Climate**

Rhondda Cynon Taf



Consultation on the

# Draft Climate Change Strategy

June 2021



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

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## SUMMARY

- This section provides a summary of the main findings from the Let's Talk Climate Change RCT consultation on the draft strategy.
- The consultation was conducted in-house using the Council's new consultation and engagement website, Let's Talk RCT. The consultation started on the 9<sup>th</sup> April and ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 and used a range of methods. The digital approach used a new online consultation tool called "[Let's Talk RCT](#)".
- The Climate Change Strategy engagement was branded as "[Let's Talk Climate Change RCT](#)" and 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 (where users are invited to provide comment and can attach images or documents) and a section where users are invited to provide their ideas on a certain topic (stories).
- In addition to the 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. 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.
- 76% of respondents to the survey agreed that the Council's work to tackle Climate Change should be set out in one plan.
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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, however the levels of agreement were lower than for the places and prosperity priorities.

%	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
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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 identified in 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.
- 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).

# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the Let's Talk Climate Change RCT Draft Strategy consultation (2021-25).
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines some background to the consultation process.
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.
- 1.4 Section 4 provides the results of the online questionnaire, ideas tool, stories and a number of polls.
- 1.5 Section 5 presents the feedback from a Virtual Young Persons Engagement meeting and Instagram engagement.
- 1.6 Section 6 presents the feedback received from the Older Persons Advisory Group.
- 1.7 Section 7 provides feedback on the staff survey.
- 1.8 Section 8 provides feedback via email.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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 \*\*\*\*\* ((We are working with the Carbon Trust to better understand the Council's Carbon Footprint and that of the County Borough, and in the next few months this information will be available. We will then set specific targets based on this detailed carbon footprint).
- 2.3 In order to deliver the Vision, the Council will continue to provide strong community leadership and create a cleaner, greener environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous and for natural eco systems to thrive.
- 2.4 In the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24, Making A Difference, it is acknowledged that delivering the Climate Change commitment is the Council's greatest challenge. The plan is 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*.
- 2.5 The Climate Commitments underpin each of the 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. The pace of change is also being accelerated by the growing pressure of people across the world to take climate action.
- 2.6 The Council's commitments to reduce carbon within the Council include:
- Reducing our carbon footprint in respect of all the Council's activities.
  - Reducing the demand for energy and embedding carbon reduction into everything we do.
  - Using public sector land for green energy generation and/or carbon storage.



- Investing in solar energy installations in Council buildings and making sure that all new schools, offices, homes and commercial buildings within the County Borough are built to a Net Zero standard.
  - Supplying all our buildings and offices with low carbon heat and/or generating our own electricity.
  - Further developing the use of hydrogen for fuel cells in Council vehicles and buildings.
  - Ensuring we recycle or reuse 80% of all municipal waste by 2025.
  - Continuing to locate services closer the people that use, work and visit them.
  - Procuring a vehicle fleet that is fit for purpose yet has a limited impact on the environment and replacing all our new cars and light goods vehicles with ultra-low emission vehicles.
  - Taking a sustainable approach to the supplies and services we buy within the Council, from major building projects to eliminating single use plastics, so that we better support the local and green economy.
  - Reducing staff travel by car by continuing to maximise the use of technology, encouraging active travel and greater use of public transport significantly reducing car commutes and business travel.
- 2.7 The success of the Climate Change Strategy will be dependent on the Council playing its part to protect the planet for future generations, and also working with other public bodies and organisations to maximise the impact of this work. This includes encouraging and facilitating changes in lifestyle in all staff and their representatives, elected Members, residents, local business as well as our visitors to Rhondda Cynon Taf. We all have a part to play.
- 2.8 In early 2021 the Council and Council's Cabinet agreed that the draft Climate Change Strategy be subject to a comprehensive public consultation over the two months to 31 May 2021. The approach for a consultation on the draft Climate Change Strategy was agreed, as well as a plan for an ongoing climate change conversation.
- 2.9 The COVID 19 pandemic and associated challenges presented a unique set of circumstances for engagement. Face-to-face engagement is not currently possible and may not be for quite some time. As a result, the Council undertook a digital by default approach.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The consultation on the draft Climate Change Strategy used a range of methods. The digital approach used a new online consultation tool called "[Let's Talk RCT](#)".
- 3.2 The Climate Change Strategy engagement was branded as "[Let's Talk Climate Change RCT](#)" and 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 (where users are invited to provide comment and can attach images or documents) and a section where users are invited to provide their ideas on a certain topic (stories).
- 3.3 A "Think Climate" YouTube video was used to outline and promote the consultation - <https://youtu.be/lyg5c4XABdk>
- 3.4 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, including, environmental groups, the Council's Citizens' Panel, The Disability Forum, Older Persons Forums, Councillors, MPs, MSs, staff, community hubs, Welsh language groups and other local Authorities.
- 3.5 The Council's social media team linked to a number of campaigns that ran through the consultation period, including, Earth Day, National Gardening Week and Water Saving Week.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 Over 1,000 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.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 We held a number of Online engagement sessions with the Older Person's Advisory Group, the Community Council Liaison Committee and representatives from Taf Youth Forum.

- 3.10 2 stakeholder email responses were received from Dr. Beth Winter (MP for Cynon Valley) and Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council. A summary of the main points are found in section 8.
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 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.
- 3.14 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).

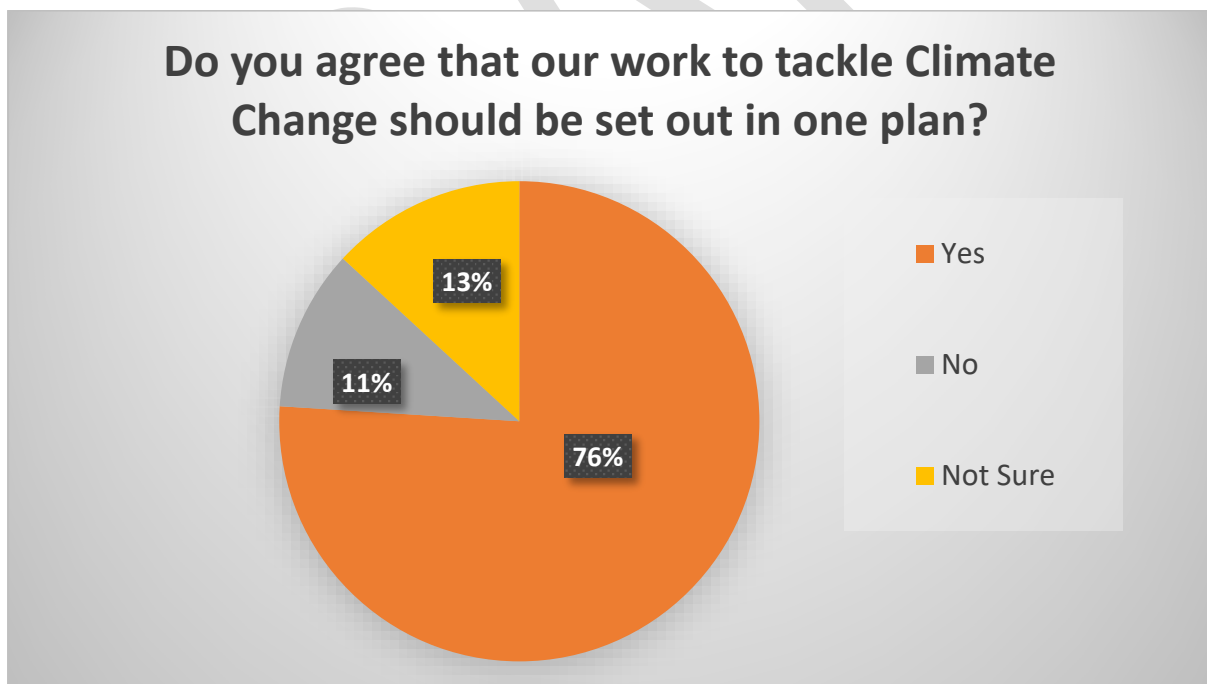
## 4 Key Findings

- 4.1 The following section outlines the results from the questionnaire, which received 175 online responses. A selection of the main themes and associated comments are provided, and the full list of comments will be provided to Cabinet and senior officers to assist with decision making.
- 4.2 In the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24, Making A Difference, it was acknowledged that delivering the Climate Change commitment is the greatest challenge. In the plan the Council is 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.

The Climate Commitments underpin each of the priorities.

- 4.3 Respondents were asked if they agreed that the work to tackle Climate Change should be set out in **one plan**.



**Figure 1 – Agreement with one Climate Change plan**

- 4.4 76% of respondents to the survey agreed that the Council's work to tackle Climate Change should be set out in one plan. 24% disagreed or were unsure.

- 4.5 The respondents who disagreed or were unsure (24%) that the Council should have one plan were asked to explain their answers.

A number of people suggested that the **Council needs to have separate plans;**

*“There should be three separate plans, each priority could then be evaluated in a more measured way.”*

*“I think it may be better to have separate plans so you can explain on areas that may need to be looked into further as time goes on.”*

*“This is a very BIG task and putting it all in one plan may water down or even damage the ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030....Also by splitting these up into a few separate plans with their own budgets etc you will have a greater chance of meeting these goals.”*

*“Inevitably tackling climate change will cut across many portfolios and should be considered as part of those and not a standalone report.”*

- 4.6 Linked to the above, people felt that there was a need to ensure that the plan was flexible and there was a need to embed the climate change actions from the Strategy into other Council plans and policy;

*“It may not be agile enough to respond to other external influences in a timely and flexible way. Having a vision is one thing, having a static plan reduces opportunity”*

*“This is the single biggest issue facing us all in the coming years, so the council needs to put it into every plan they have going forward and showing the way”*

*“It is a multi-faceted issue, and needs more than one directional plan”*

*“One plan would mean all the information / measures set out in one document, but there's the risk that it would be seen as separate to other Council work, or worse, just ignored if not used as a thread through existing plans”.*

### **Climate Change Strategy – Places**

- 4.7 Table 1 below, shows respondents' views on the Council's strategy to tackle Climate Change, related to the **Places priority**. Respondents were asked whether they thought the following actions would help to make a difference.

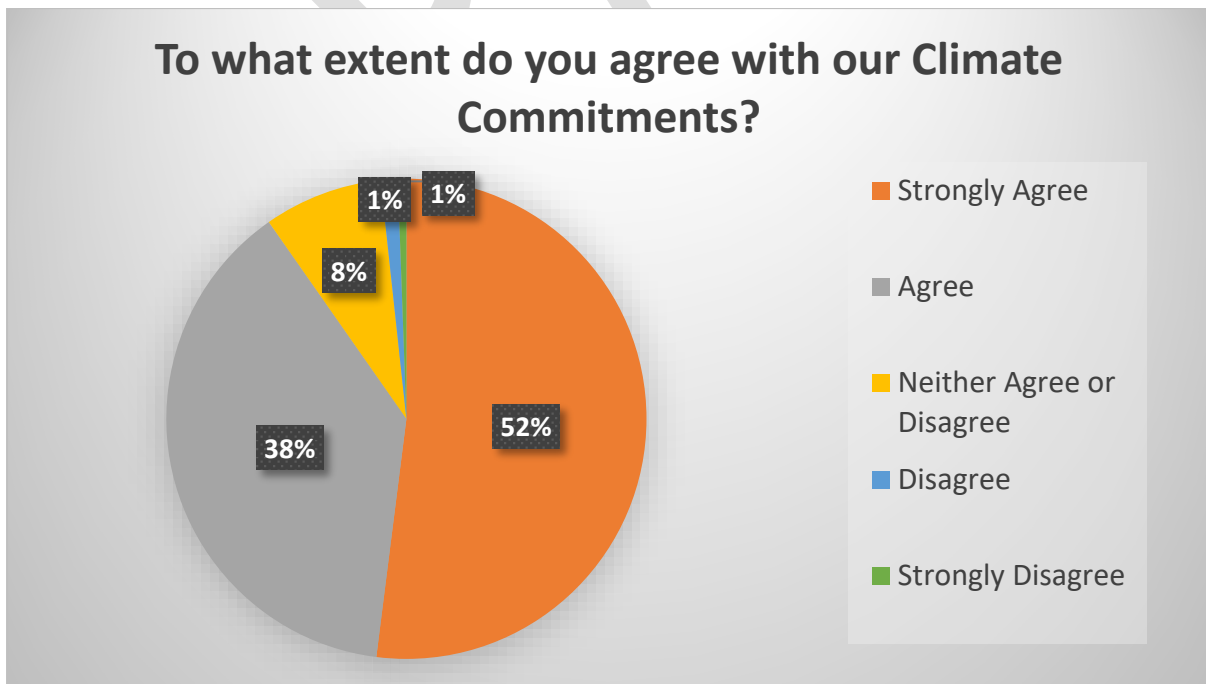
The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions.

### Do you think the following would help to make a difference? (%)

%	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

**Table 1: Across the County Borough - Thinking Climate: Places**

- 4.8 Respondents were asked what they thought of the overall Places priority. Figure 2 shows that 90% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PLACE** commitments.



**Figure 2 – Agreement with Climate Change Commitments (Places)**

- 4.9 When asked if they had any ideas or suggestions, they would like to see added to the Council's Climate Change commitments in relation to places, the following themes emerged:

### **Electric Vehicles**

*"Support for early EV adopters to facilitate charging at home, and to somehow allow on-street charging at terraced houses"*

*"Infrastructure for electric vehicles has to be a priority - great that there are two points being put in at Porth station. Perhaps supermarkets should also follow suit (like Lidl in Dinas)."*

### **Housing & Energy**

*"Insist that all new build homes in RCT have solar ..."*

*"Make it easier and cheaper to make eco changes to a new build or an existing house."*

*"Help homeowners reduce their reliance on fossil fuels."*

### **Transport/Roads**

*"should commit to not building new roads and not introducing measures to increase road capacity. Making it easier to drive will not encourage people to use other forms of transport"*

*"Prioritising active travel over road users."*

*"Remove the "without upsetting drivers" statement from the section about providing active travel options."*

### **Biodiversity**

*"A commitment to tree and wildflower planting, and less mowing to help biodiversity."*

*"Tree planting initiatives...."*

*"More trees to be planted. Areas of land given over to nature and wildlife. Grass verges allowed to grow and have wildflowers."*

### **Education in Schools**

*"Education and practical projects in our schools and colleges"*

*"Community projects and education would be a good idea and including schools. There is a lot open ground not being used where wooden nature education classrooms could be set up and the area turned into mini nature reserves and ponds."*

*"Education on climate change to have a higher profile in schools and places of further education."*

## General Education/Communication

*“Education around recycling and littering”*

*“Environmental officers are needed to enforce, inspire and educate”*

## Recycling

*“Investment to recycle more waste on our doorstep”*

*“Focus on waste reduction as well as using and recycling waste”*

*“Recycling is the least good option - you need to move towards a more circular economy and do everything you can to encourage and support local businesses to do the same”*

## Climate Change Strategy - Prosperity

- 4.10 Table 2 below, shows respondents’ views on the Council’s strategy to tackle Climate Change, related to the **Prosperity priority**. Respondents were asked whether they thought the following actions would help to make a difference.

The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions.

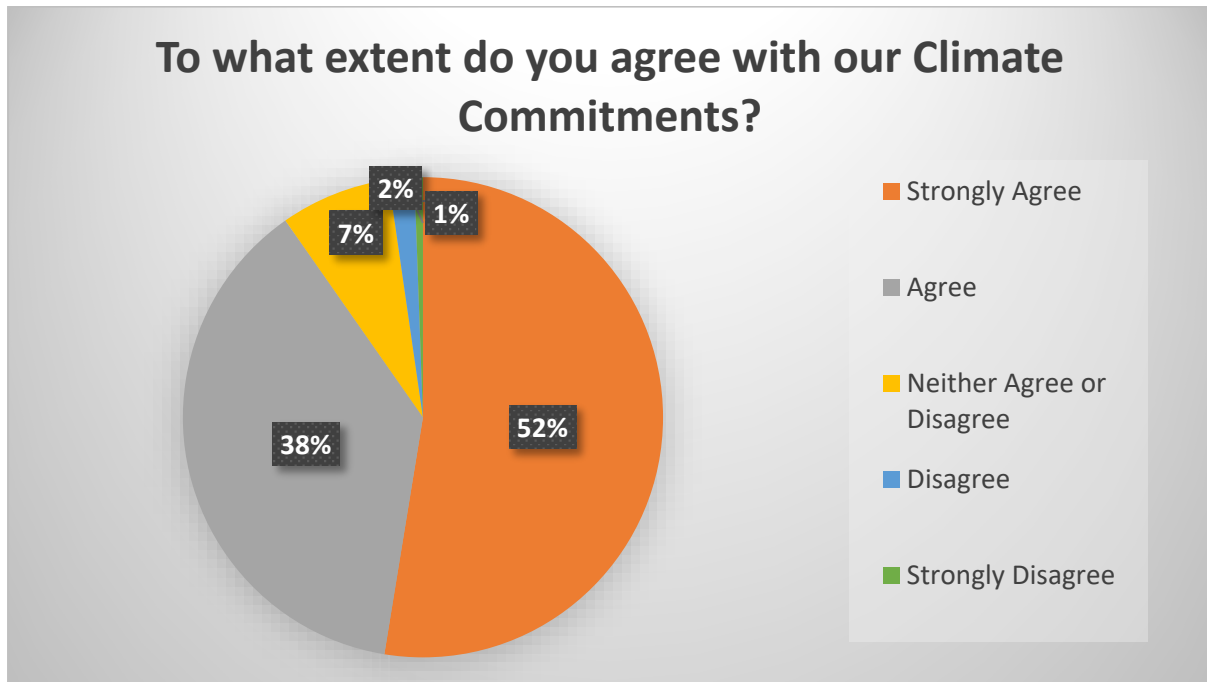
%	Yes	No	Don't know
Making sure that our plans that set out how and where we build do not add further carbon emissions into the air and protect the high and hilly land across the County Borough	92.0	2.9	5.1
Helping people to use less energy in their homes	96.0	1.7	2.3
Helping to make sure new houses 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
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**Table 2 - In homes, work and businesses - *Thinking Climate: Prosperity* (%)**

4.11 Figure 3 shows that overall, **90% of respondents strongly agree or agree** with the Council's Climate Change Prosperity commitments.



**Figure 3 – Agreement with Climate Change commitments (*Prosperity*)**

4.12 When asked if they had any ideas or suggestions, they would like to see added to the Council's Climate Change commitments in relation to prosperity, the following themes and comments emerged;

#### **Young People**

*"Include children's voices and be creative help people imagine the future"*

*"... for children to have more organised outdoor activities local to them on weekends in order to learn about their environment and how to look after it"*

*"Empower children and young people to help make positive differences for their future by involving, listening and valuing their contributions."*

#### **Community Groups/Projects**

*"is there scope for more community owned energy projects?"*

*“...why not have community groups set up to litter pick/plant areas, create wildflower areas etc. More of a coordinated approach across RCT”*

*“Better communication and community involvement”.*

### **Reducing food waste**

*“I think work should be done with food retailers/ supermarkets and other food producers in RCT and school dinners to reduce food and packaging waste and increase, and educate on, plant-based meals (or at least meat reduction)”.*

*“Making school meals low carbon, through eating less red meat and using more plant-based foods.”*

### **Businesses**

*“... I would like to see the Council support and promote local green businesses and social enterprises e.g. repair shops/zero waste stores”*

*“More onus on businesses to reduce packaging, collect waste packaging, recycle / reuse / repurpose products.....”*

*“To focus on zero carbon inter trade, not just local trade. We need to be responsible citizens of the world, not just RCT.”*

### **Tree Planting**

*“Also add planting wildflowers to the tree and shrub planting.”*

*“More fruiting plants & trees = free healthy food”*

*“.....Must ensure we protect and enhance green space and biodiversity. 20-minute neighbourhoods and green space within 300 metres of every resident”*

## **Climate Change Strategy - People**

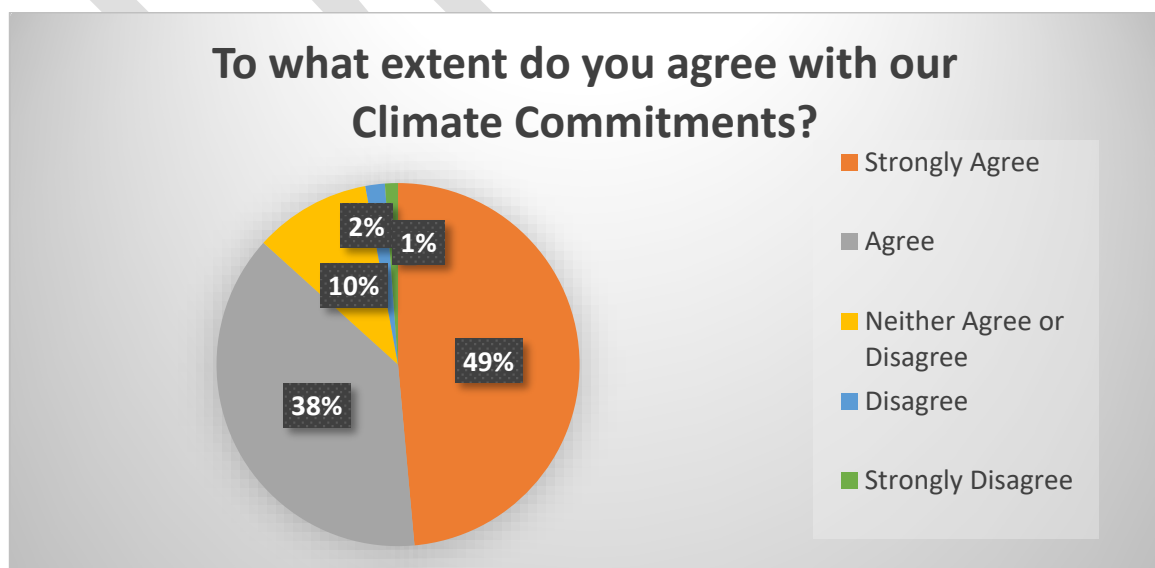
- 4.13 Table 3 below, shows respondents’ views on the Council’s strategy to tackle Climate Change, related to the **People priority**. Respondents were asked whether they thought the following actions would help to make a difference.

The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions, however the levels of agreement were lower than for the places and prosperity priorities.

%	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

**Table 3 - For people who live, work and visit Rhondda Cynon Taf - *Thinking Climate: People (%)***

- 4.14 Respondents were asked what they thought of the overall People priority. Figure 4 shows 87% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PEOPLE** commitments.



**Figure 4 – Agreement with Climate Change commitments (People)**

- 4.15 When asked if they had any ideas or suggestions, they would like to see added to the Council's Climate Change commitments in relation to the people priority, the following themes and comments emerged:

### **Vegetarian & Plant Based meals**

*"Am not sure information is sufficient for people to make lifestyle changes, also need to enable e.g. providing active travel routes, cookery classes to learn about local/vegetarian food etc."*

*"...I think the idea of encouraging vegetarian/vegan options in schools is great."*

*"Encouraging vegan diets. Educating people on the environmental damage caused by meat and dairy."*

*"Please extend the vegetarian options to plant based. even vegan junk food is healthier than its non-vegan alternative and would have a drastic impact on helping the environment :)"*

### **Ynysangharad War Memorial Park for activities**

*"Ynysangharad Park should be a pilot and if successful rolled out to other places so people don't have to travel to join in."*

*"It's a good idea to make space in Ynysangharad Park for people to learn about nature etc, but we need things like this in all our communities in order for them to be easily accessed by more people."*

*"Why only Ynysangharad Park this would need people to travel from all parts of the borough, more carbon emissions, parking problems etc. Smaller hubs in more locations....."*

### **Providing green spaces for growing vegetables**

*"Teach people to grow using their own space through vertical planting and permaculture is a better solution. This will reduce carbon release in the air"*

*"We need to encourage growth of fruit & veg locally, which should start in schools & can be sold to families for a small fee."*

*"I strongly believe in providing land for Allotments. This would be a huge step forward from the past into the future for the benefit of the People and Nature itself."*

### **Community Gardens/Projects**

*"Building on stuff like community gardens, also providing land for community ownership projects like Skyline"*

*"Community gardens with mixed age groups and learning resources would be excellent."*

*“Having communal gardens in villages. Find ways to teach older children/people to respect their communities”*

### **Education/Learning**

*“As RCT is such a large and diverse county, opportunities to learn about and experience environmental issues should be created in as many locations as possible. Co-ordination between all the various groups with environmental interests that exist.”*

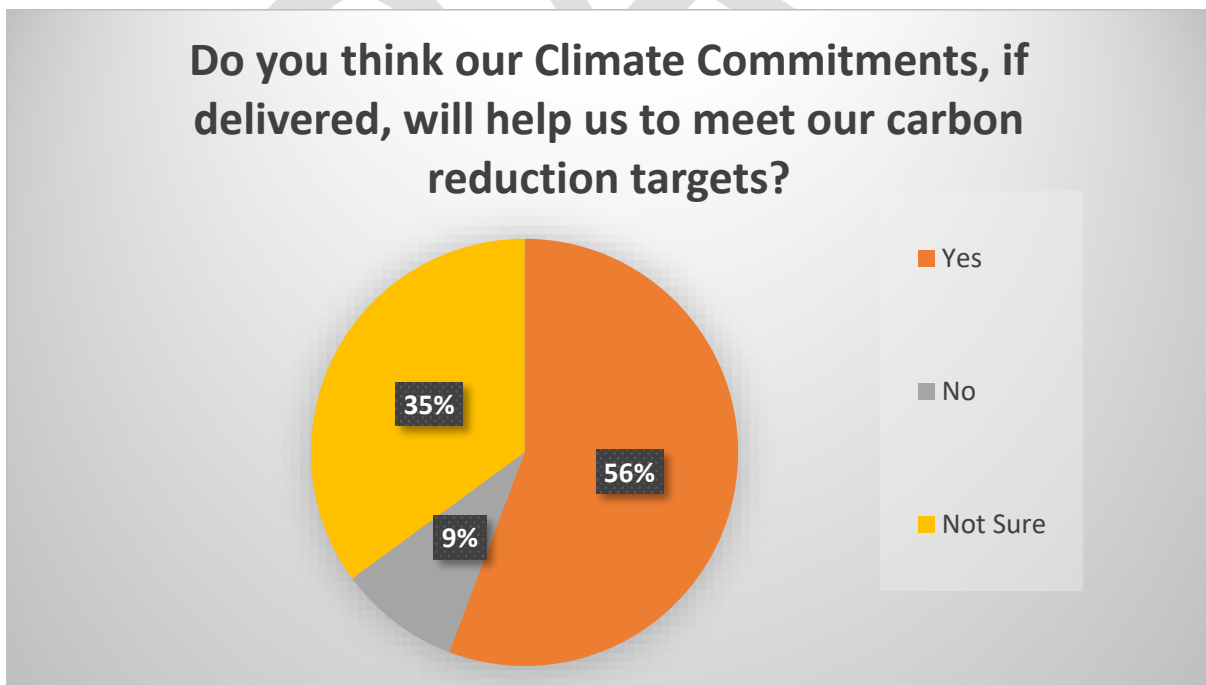
*“Need to change peoples' mindsets so they "care" about where they live, work etc. Somehow, develop community pride and responsibility. How to make people care if they don't already?”*

*“Reduce the need for importing food with high food miles, especially things like strawberries out of season, and obviously other food products if there is an alternative or perhaps it's about educating people”*

*“Education is needed alongside encouragement”*

### **Meeting our Climate Commitments**

- 4.16 Figure 5 shows that 56% of respondents thought that the Climate Commitments would help the Council to meet its carbon reduction targets. 35% of respondents were unsure.



**Figure 5 – Will the Council’s commitments help to meet carbon reduction targets?**

- 4.17 Those who were unsure or felt that the commitments wouldn't meet the carbon reduction targets had the opportunity to suggest what the Council should be doing to reach the carbon reduction targets.
- 4.18 The following are the main themes identified and some examples of the comments received;

### **Everyone must play a part**

*"The council can only do so much. It has to be the residents who change their lifestyles and reduce their impact on the environment..."*

*"I think it is a vital target to reach but it is an ambitious one which will require a big shift in the way we all live, work and deliver our services. It will require everyone to work together but if we do this, we can all make a difference!"*

### **It will require some level of Intervention**

*"Tougher laws need to be imposed to make sure the transition to green homes and greener transport are achievable before 2030. People are too comfortable and rooted in their ways and won't change unless the law enforces it. Must push WG to impose new laws"*

*"Needs massive intervention from Government and we need to drastically cut fossil fuel use....."*

*".... Maybe recycling for homes and businesses needs to be mandatory."*

### **More focus needed on Transport**

*"Much more of a focus on modal shift away from driving. Removal of all barriers on active travel routes so they can be used widely."*

*"Massively more ambitious on transport commitments. Set targets on 95% pupils walk/cycle to every school (similar to present day Dutch levels) reallocate road space to more efficient transport (cycling/buses)"*

*"Transport infrastructure has to be a priority too - I would use public transport if it could get me to work!"*

### **Council Electric Vehicles**

*"Full electric fleet of trucks and vans free public transport."*

*"Investment in more electric vans and lorries for RCT staff use."*

*"Change council fleet and mowing equipment to cleaner fuels or electric."*

### **Procurement**

*"Look at all products sourced and used, including cleaning: are they harmful to aquatic life, are they sustainable, are they made from recycled materials and can they be fully recycled?"*

*"..... needs to be some emphasis on improving skills of Council staff to make sustainable decisions e.g. procurement"*

*"Working with all your suppliers of goods and services to ensure they are also decarbonising their activities and those of their supply chain. We all have to commit to achieving the targets"*

### **Engagement and Education**

*"This is a big challenge for all society, RCT needs to engage with us to ensure everyone meets their obligations....."*

*"People need to be educated in how to make small changes to their lifestyles (less consumerism, fast fashion/food, using their money to support local and sustainable businesses, etc.) is the only way to ensure a better future for us all"*

*"engage with the public; have a Public meeting in different areas. Leaflets through house doors"*

### **Working from home**

*"Encouraging people to work closer to home and/or work from home."*

*"Encourage businesses to let people work from home where possible. Less cars on the roads, fewer office buildings means more land for other things"*

### **Positive**

*"I'm not sure about "the target" but it will be a step in the right direction (hopefully)"*

*"It depends how many of the commitments are put into real action - if you do all the things suggested, then RCT could become a real model for best practice amongst local authorities."*

### **Other**

*"Don't invest so much of the pensions in fossil fuels."*

*"Look to provide leadership and engage and empower people at all levels to take responsibility for their own and their communities actions"*

*"We need to get on with it. These are lovely words, let's act on them."*


*"Increase local self-sufficiency and set up a work reduction scheme where workers can spend the time giving back to their community."*

### **Ideas**

- 4.19 In addition to the survey, the Let's Talk Climate Change project asked site visitors to leave an "idea" on how they thought the Council could tackle Climate Change.

23 ideas were submitted to the Let's Talk Climate Change project as follows:






### **Electric Vehicles and charging points**



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**Super Fast Electric Car Chargers**






there is already a considerable noticeable increase in electric vehicles within the Rhondda, we MUST have a super charger in the borough (preferably a charging hub)  
instead of allowing all our old petrol garages to become car washes, lets create super fast charge hubs not small scale supermarket drip feed chargers

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**Encourage EV ownership by offering a few incentives eg free parking, free charging, discount in leisure centre or discounted train fares.**

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
### **Recycling**



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**Expand the repair cafe network**

As a Welsh Government priority, RCT council should work with existing providers to ensure there is a reuse and repair network in the County Borough, with facilities available on all high streets.






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**Have terracycle points across the county so that residents can recycle things that can't be put in the doorstep recycling bags**

Such as blister packs, pens, tetrapaks, soft/stretchy plastics, etc.





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**Encourage cafes and takeaways to use recyclable packaging and ditch single use plastic items such as straws and cutlery**

Caerphilly is a Plastic Free Community, can our towns follow suit?

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**Set up repair cafes to encourage residents not to buy new and reduce their consumption**

Repair cafes

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**Incorporate a new recycling system**


In 2019, the BBC published a film by Douglas Shaw called "Would you sort your rubbish into seven different bags?" In the Swedish City of Eskilstuna, they recycle over half their waste and send nothing to landfill. In the home, they sort their waste into seven different coloured bags. The materials are sorted according to a colour coded system. At the recycling centre, scanners can separate the bags efficiently. I think it is worth consulting cities, councils etc that have carried out schemes like this to make recycling more engaging and fun.

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## Housing


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**New build houses and industrial units should be fitted with EV charging points.**

EV charging points for all new builds along with renewable energy as a priority. Planning rules should include this as standard.

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**Retrofit Older Properties**

Work with Welsh & UK Govt to fund retrofit energy saving improvements to all properties.

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**Renewable Energy suited to Housing**

With so many providers of Solar and Wind Power, could the Council provide a grant or advertise reliable and reasonably cheap companies? It would be lovely to see every house with a renewable energy source, like when you go to Spain and see Solar Panels on nearly every house.

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**Living in a terrace house it would be difficult to change electric car without rolling out the charging lead over the pavement.**

More charging points needed in RCT. If possible in RCT car parks?

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**Traffic and roads**

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**Keep traffic flowing by building bus stop lay-byes, so when the bus stops the traffic keeps going and is not held up causing more pollution.**

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**Stop New Road Building**

No more new roads.

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**No New Roads**

Transport emissions must be cut by 50% by 2030. You can not build new roads and achieve this - it's that simple. There are no ifs or buts.

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**Public Transport**

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**Electrification of all public Transport**

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**Safeguard rural bus services**

For many outlying rural communities in our area the transport options are car or infrequent bus services. The timetables of these services should be expanded further to allow traveller flexibility, and subsidised with incentives for target users e.g. young people/families

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**The 15 minute neighbourhood?**

So many of our communities are almost set up for this, they might just benefit from better transport infrastructure, one more amenity, or increased support and investment in existing provision.

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**Looking at improving public transport would be better than spending £30 million on a mile of new road (Cynon gateway north)**

No more new roads

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**Give us better cycle paths!**

As regular bike users we need safer routes to get around, to travel to school, and between different areas of RCT. More cycle racks should be made available in towns, and railway stations. The cycling proficiency scheme should be relaunched to encourage more young people on their bikes.

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**Other**

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**Increased awareness raising of the climate crisis**

Projects such as public artworks should be created to raise local awareness of the climate and biodiversity crises. A citizen's assembly, similar to that which has been created in Blaenau Gwent, would help find solutions and impacts on different people, as well as increasing awareness. People have shown that they are prepared to be more adaptable than RCT gives them credit for. People want things to change!

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**Install more hydro schemes like the one in Radyr, we have the weirs and rivers already.**

Radyr Hydro Scheme on all weirs.

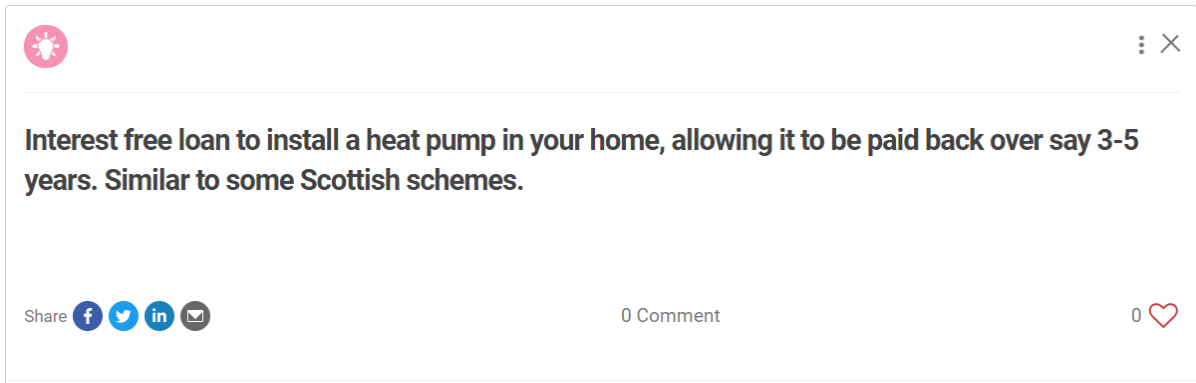
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**Use Cardiff Bay to generate electricity as it flows out of the Bay, The Bay is already there just needs the equipment.**

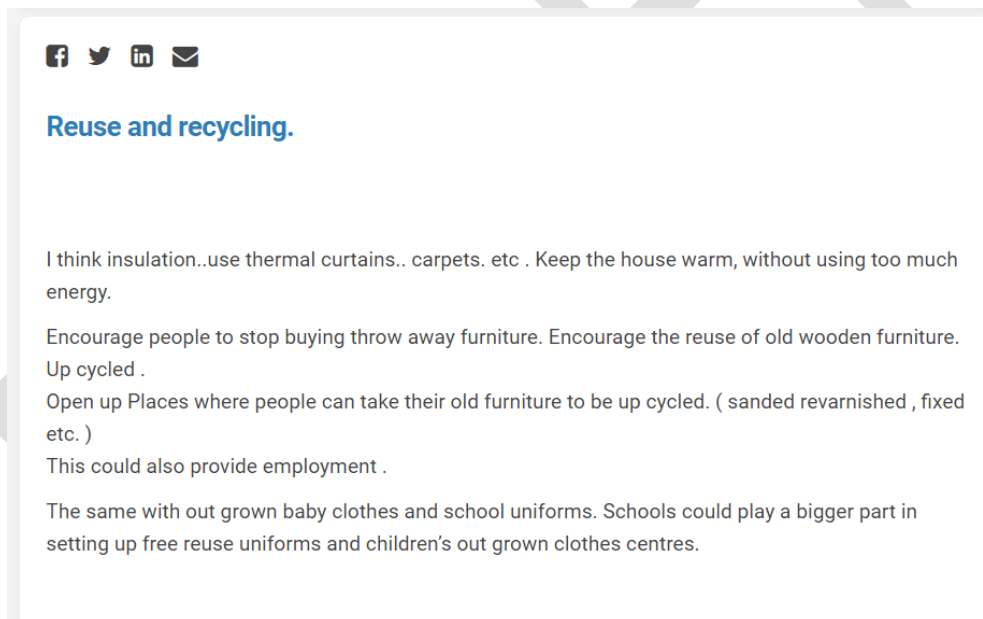
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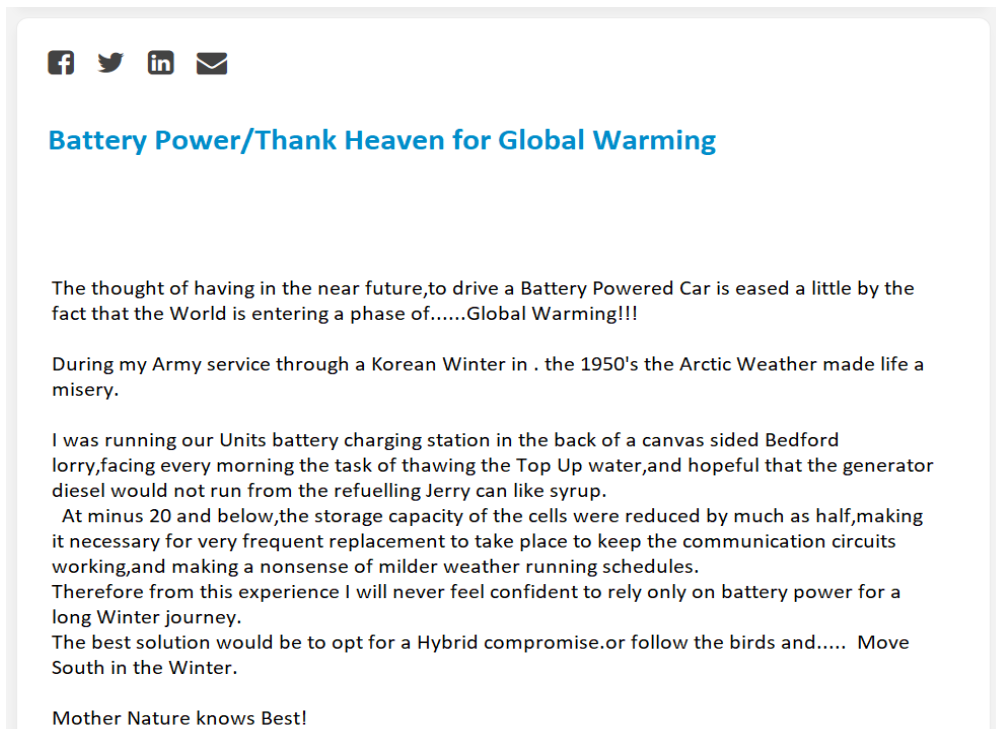


**Figure 6 – Ideas - How can the Council do more to tackle Climate Change?**

## **Stories**

- 4.20 The purpose of the stories engagement tool was to encourage respondents to leave a more detailed account of what they are already doing to reduce the impact of Climate Change at home. Two stories were received:

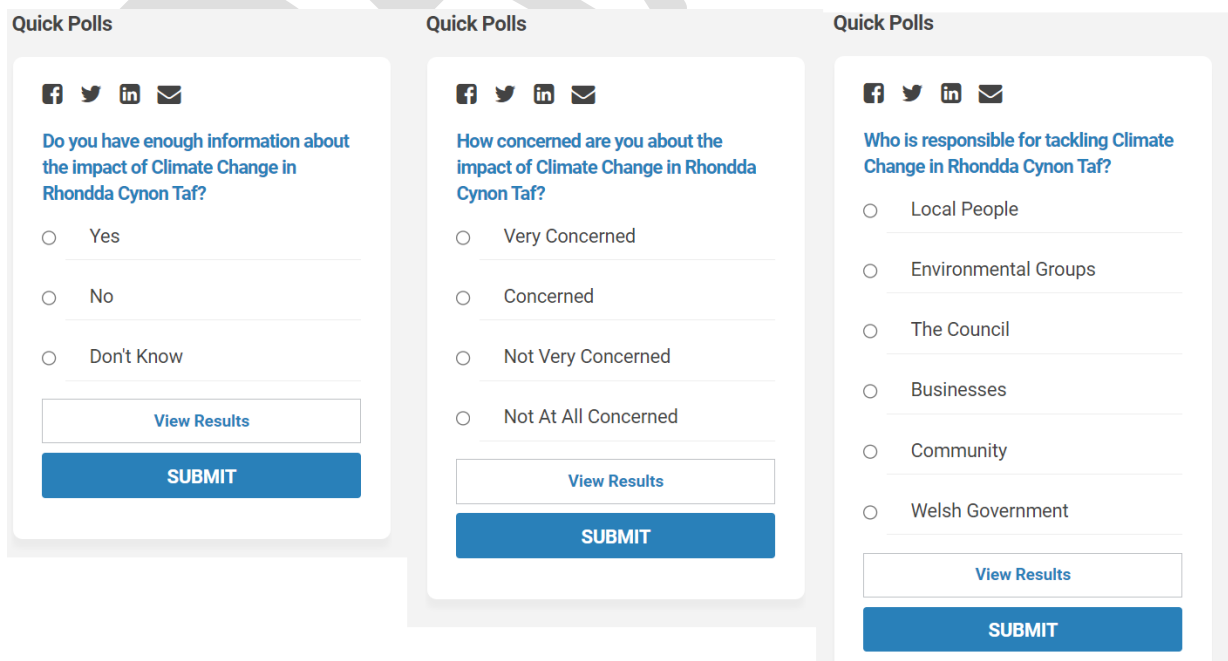




**Figure 7 – How you are playing your part to protect the planet?**

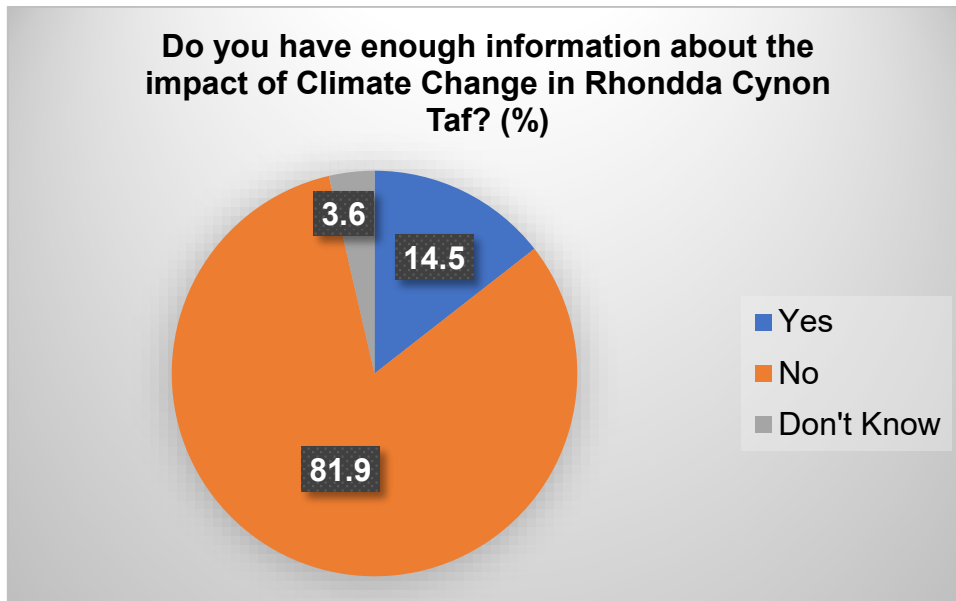
**Quick Polls**

4.21 3 quick web polls were set up within the Let's Talk Climate Change project, as shown in figure 8 below;



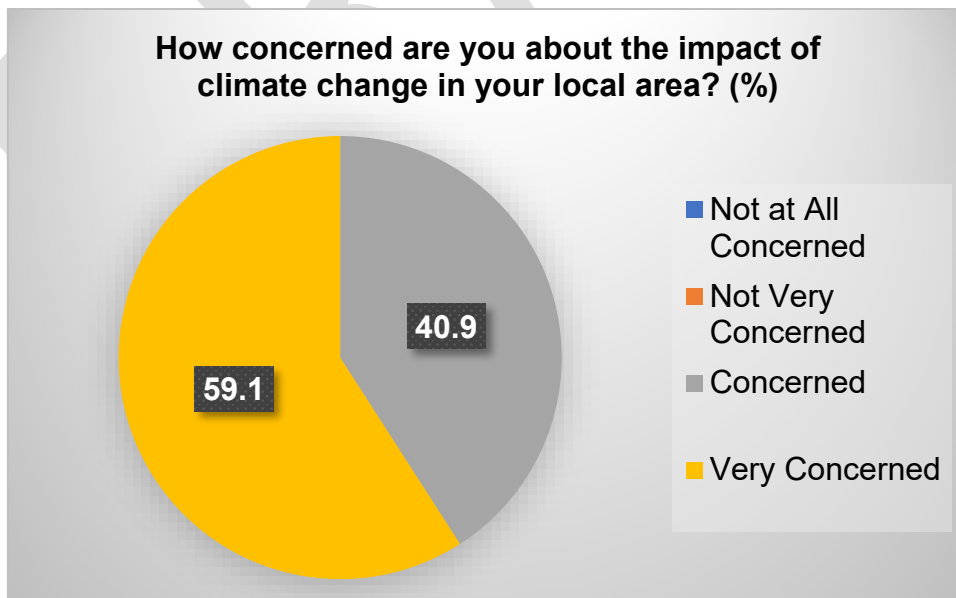
**Figure 8 – Quick Polls**

- 4.22 Quick poll 1 asked “Do you think there is enough information available for everyone to help tackle climate change?”



**Figure 9 – Is there enough information available on climate change?**

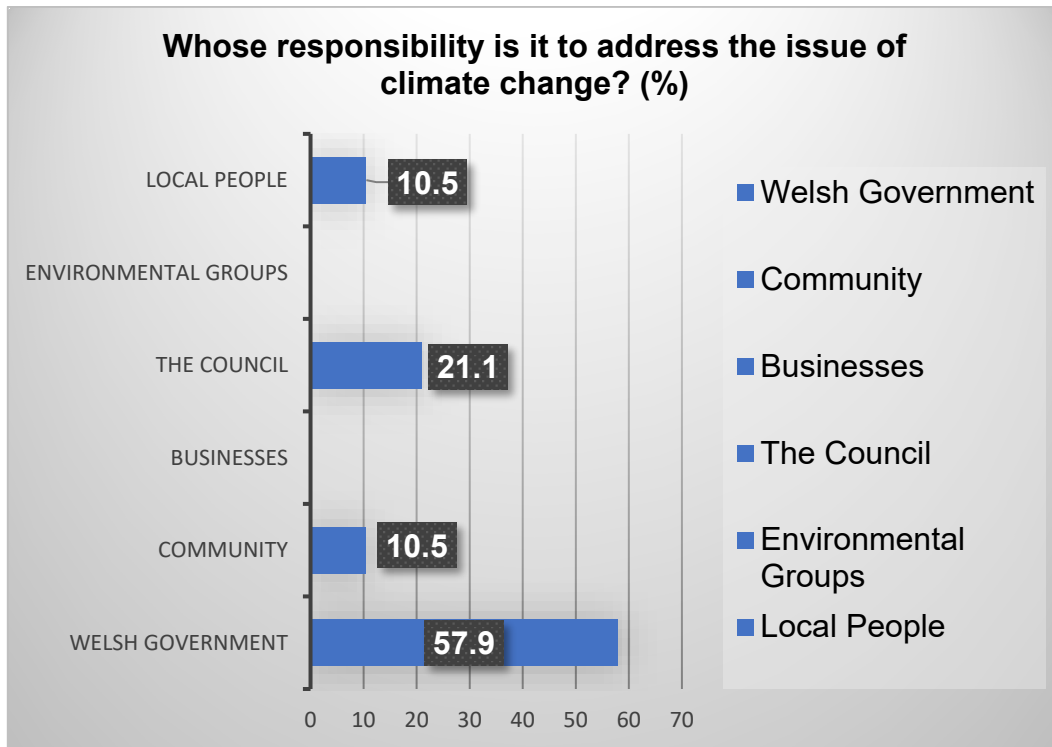
- 4.23 81.9% of respondents felt that they didn't have enough information about the impact of Climate Change. 14.5% said that they did.
- 4.24 Quick poll 2 asked “How concerned are you about the impact of climate change in your local area?”



**Figure 10 – Concerns about Climate Change in RCT**

- 4.25 100% of respondents said they were very concerned or concerned about the impact of Climate Change in their local area.

- 4.26 Quick poll 3 asked “Whose responsibility is it to address the issue of climate change?”



**Figure 11 – Whose responsibility is it to tackle Climate Change?**

- 4.27 Over 57% of respondents thought it was Welsh Government’s responsibility to tackle climate change, followed by the Council (21%).

**Note: the response numbers were low for Poll 2 and 3**

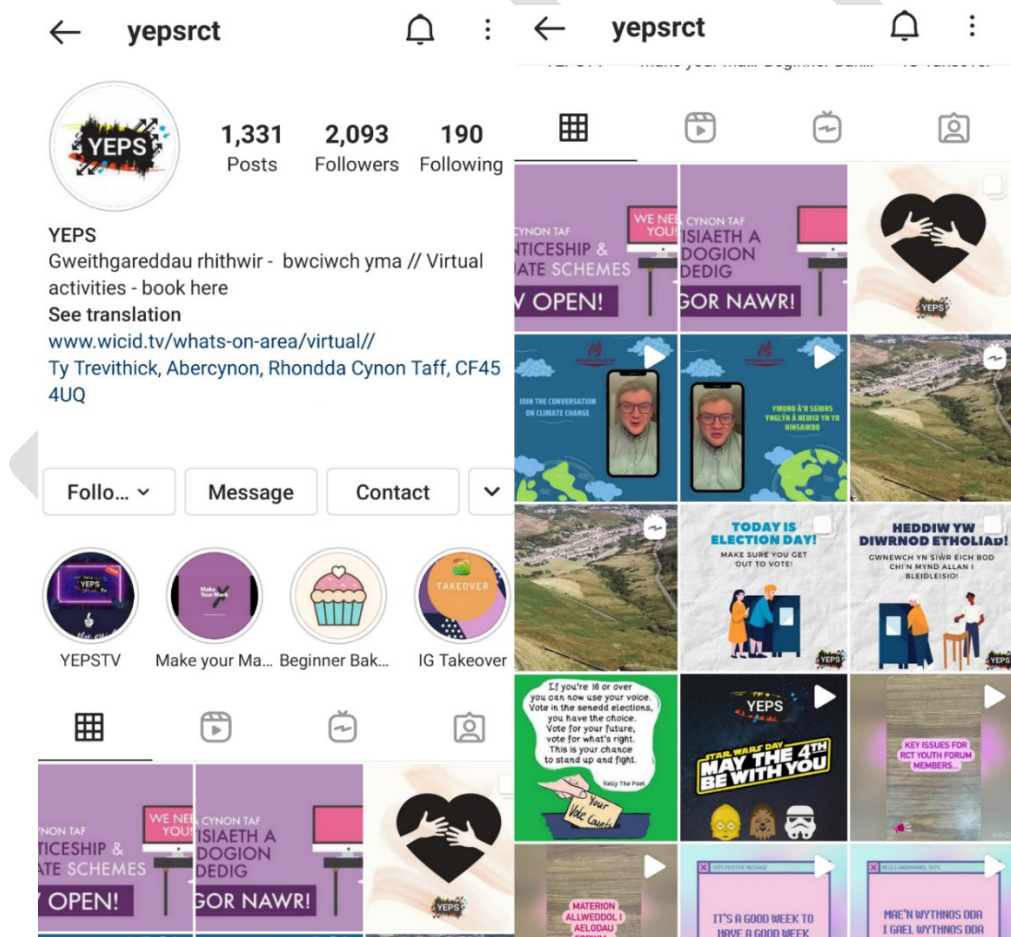


## 5 Young Persons Engagement

5.1 The Youth Engagement Participation Service (YEPS) promoted the climate change conversation by sharing existing RCT tweets and Facebook posts via the following website and social media platforms:

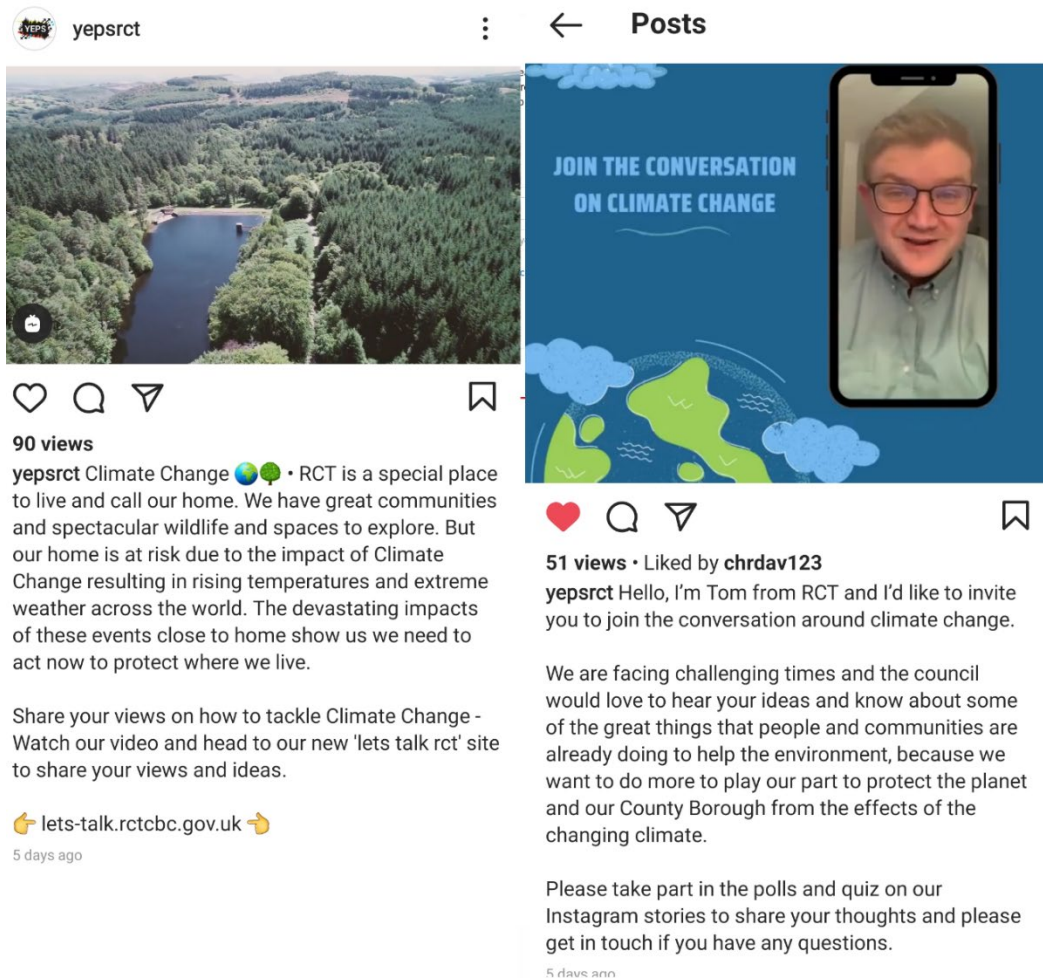
- Wicid.tv – average of 1,300 users monthly
- Twitter – 1,236 followers
- Facebook 2,507
- Instagram – 2,093 followers

5.2 Two bilingual grid posts were created on Instagram to draw attention to the Think Climate video that was created to promote the ‘Let’s Talk Climate Change’ project on the Let’s Talk RCT website. Instagram followers were signposted to links to the project and an introductory video was also posted to make them aware of the short polls that would be appearing in Instagram stories.



**Figure 12 – YEPS RCT Instagram account**

5.3 The figure below shows the grid posts that were published by YEPS to promote Let’s Talk Climate Change RCT.



**Figure 13 – Think Climate RCT grid posts**

- 5.4 The following figures show the grid posts that were published by YEPS to promote Let's Talk Climate Change RCT. The first story poll that was published asked "Do you think you know enough about climate change?" 27 YEPS followers responded and 56% selected the thumbs down image to say 'No'. 44% responded 'Yes'.
- 5.5 When asked "Are you concerned about the impact of climate change on your local area?", 25 YEPS followers responded with 60% saying they were concerned and 40% saying they were not concerned about the impact of Climate Change on their local area.



Figure 14 – Instagram polls

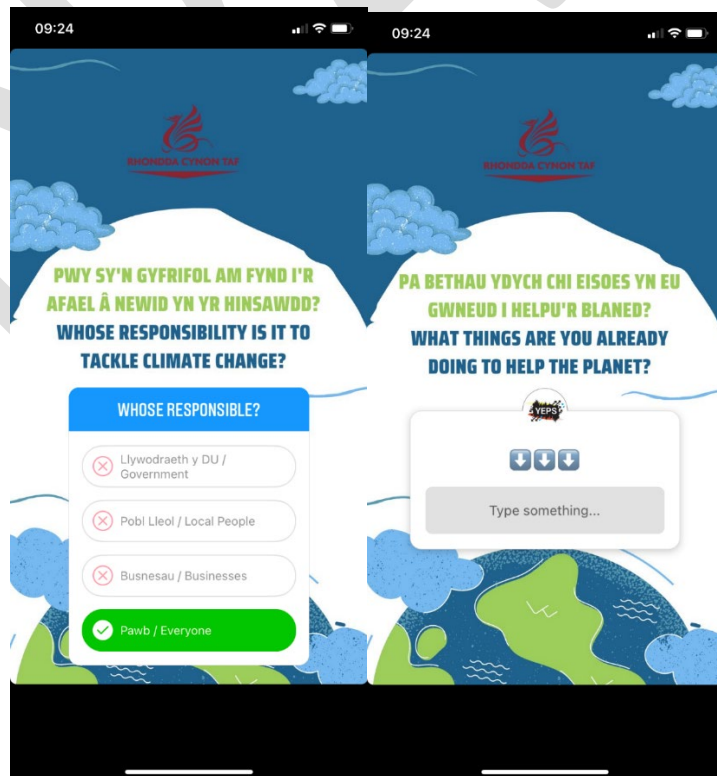
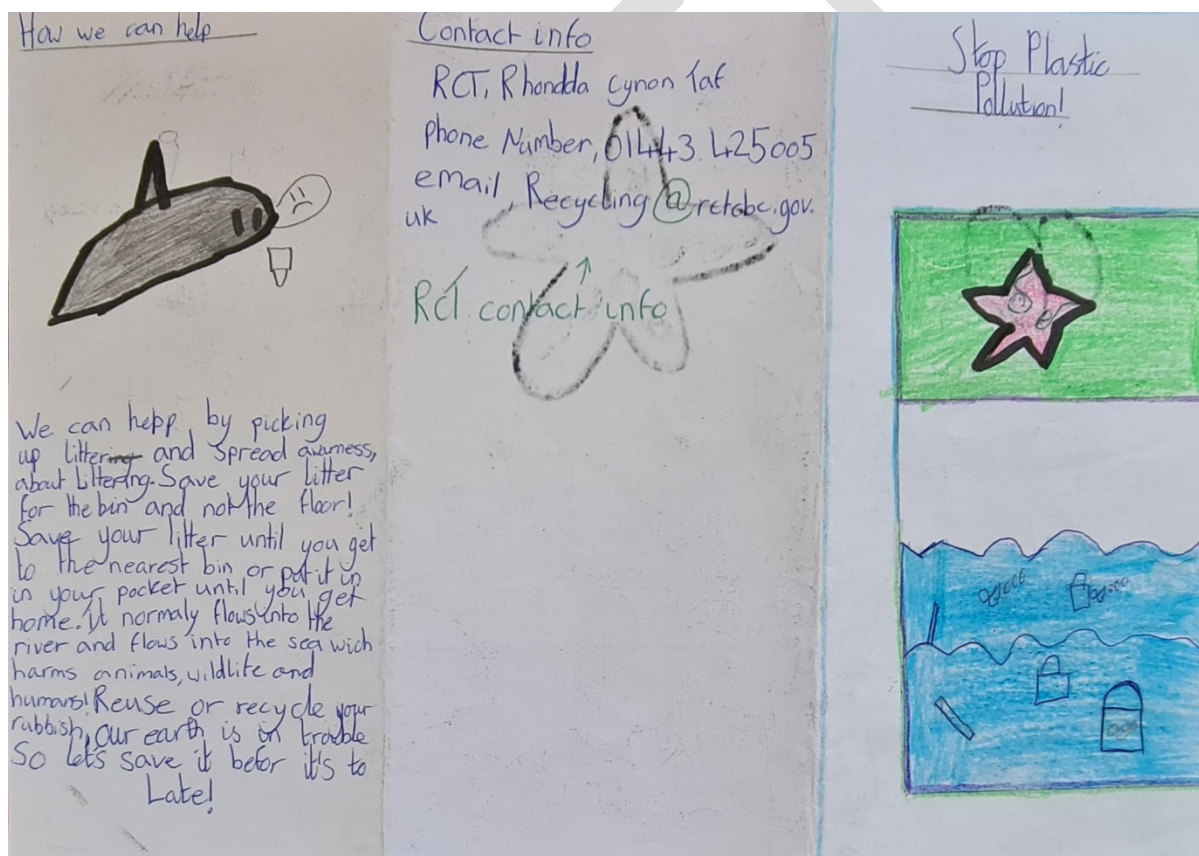


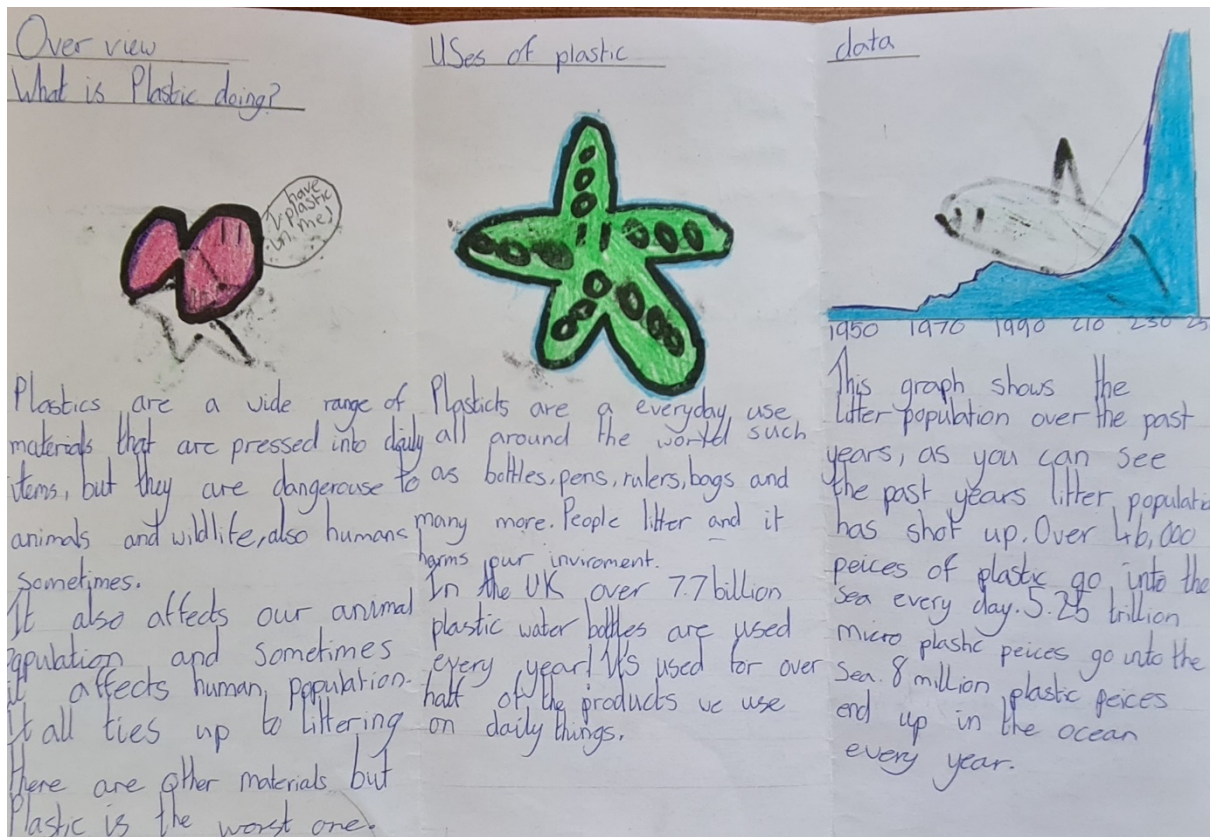
Figure 15 – Instagram question and comments

- 5.6 When asked “Whose responsibility is it to tackle climate change?”, 23 followers responded. 17 voted ‘Everyone’, 3 voted ‘Local People’ and 3 voted ‘The Council / UK Government’.
- 5.7 The final Instagram story asked “What things are you already doing to help the planet? One comment was received “*Not dropping rubbish.*”

### Primary School Responses

- 5.8 A sample of responses in relation to the Climate Change consultation were received from Trehopcyn Primary School. Class 4 sent in some work that they had been doing on the environment, including a leaflet, letters and some posters, examples of which are shown below.





**Figures 16a & 16b – Plastic pollution leaflets**

Dear Portypridd Council members,  
I am writing to you today to address the issues referring to plastic and pollution.

Oil pollution is a major factor to the problem, a couple days ago I went down to the river bank and I was shocked to see the amount of oil that was in the river and by the banks. This means that the wildlife in the river are in danger because it's destroying their habitat.

It is astonishing how much litter is in Portypridd and Barry Sidings, also the cricket club. The people who litter have no care for the planet and are destroying it bit by bit. They need to be prosecuted.

Dog mess is another local form of pollution and again

people disregard it. It ruins the social environment and the streets makes some places feel like a pig sty. People just ignore their dogs and it continues to happen. We need more enforcement.

Plastic is biggest factor to our problems. It is a deadly material to a lot of creatures like turtles, seagulls etc. We are losing a substantial chunk of marine life and we need to stop.

My solutions are to contact various oil companies and to ask them to stop dumping oil in the water, to place tighter restrictions on dog mess, encourage less littering and for shops to use less plastic.

Figure 17 – Letter 1



Figure 18 – Poster 1



**Figure 19 – Poster 2**

### **Youth Forum Zoom meeting**

- 5.9 A Zoom meeting was set up with 5 members of Taf Youth Forum. The session began by sharing the 'Let's Talk Climate Change' site and playing the video to give an overview of the topic.
- 5.10 We asked the group if they had any ideas about what the Council could do to help tackle climate change and the following ideas were given:
- “Encourage people to ride bikes instead of using other transport to help.”*
- “Change the vehicles the Council uses to be electric vehicles.”*
- “Encourage people to shop more locally.”*
- 5.11 The group also discussed their feelings on Climate Change and acknowledged that there could be more done to help young people understand the issue. The group discussed how they had noticed a change in the weather locally and the impacts of flooding in their area were also discussed.

The group were asked if they currently did anything with the aim of helping the environment and tackling climate change. One participant spoke about how they try to save plastic bottles and re-purpose them into plant pots. Most of the group spoke about how they and/or their families recycle but also highlighted some of the downfalls of trying to recycle more.

*“We try to recycle everything but it’s sometimes hard to know what can and can’t be recycled. The plastic recycling is hard because some can and some can’t be recycled.”*

*“I tried to eat less meat. I was vegetarian for 6 months but found it difficult to keep up. Fast food options for vegetarians aren’t great.”*

*“I keep plastic bottles and use these as a craft to make them into plant pots that I then use to put plants in.”*

- 5.12 The group were asked the Quick Poll questions which lead to a number of discussion points. Firstly, they were asked:

***Do you have enough information about the impact of Climate Change in Rhondda Cynon Taf?***

All 5 participants said they currently did not have enough information.

The group again acknowledged that a lack of understanding on the main issues often prevents young people from knowing what they can do to contribute towards tackling the problem.

- 5.13 The group were asked to identify the best ways to share information with young people and the most popular response was through social media with Instagram and Snapchat being identified as the most used platforms. The group also highlighted how important it is for the information that is shared from the Council to be relevant and aimed directly at young people relating to topics that directly affect them.

*“The information online should be shorter so you don’t have to read a lot but then a link provided to a page with more information that you can use if you want to. It puts me off if there’s a lot of words to read at once. This would have more of an impact I think.”*

*“I didn’t think much about the flooding at the time but then saw a programme on TV which showed people in the area and how they had been affected. I saw how they felt and it had a big impact on me.”*

A suggestion was made to utilise social media pages to promote weekly topics for discussion that they could have with their families or to set challenges that would help identify how they could make a difference.

*“Have fun interactive ideas of things we could do daily to give ideas and challenges to talk about different topics.”*



- 5.14 The group were then asked the remaining poll questions with the results as follows:

***How concerned are you about the impact of Climate Change in Rhondda Cynon Taf?***

***Very Concerned 4***

***Concerned 0***

***Not Very Concerned 0***

***Not At All Concerned 1***

***Who is responsible for tackling Climate Change in Rhondda Cynon Taf?***

The group felt the responsibility lay with all groups referenced as options.

“It is for everyone to do their bit.”

- 5.15 Throughout the discussion it became clear that the group had an interest in the topic but felt they did not currently have the right information to be able to know how they could become involved in activities to help. One participant raised an issue of litter being in a lake nearby and asked for information about how they could become involved in clean ups to try to prevent wildlife being affected. The group decided that they could use this as a project to work on and look at how they can become involved in regular litter picks and projects to clean up local areas.

## 6 Older Persons Advisory Group

- 6.1 An online meeting was held with the Older Person's Advisory group as part of the engagement and the following outlines the main discussion points.
- 6.2 There were concerns about the environmental impact of litter and particularly the amount of take away cups, whilst businesses have been closed and more recently face masks. There are a number of local groups that help with the litter and this proactive community work is helpful. There were calls for more signage to discourage litter.
- 6.3 The environmental impact of Fly Tipping was also discussed and the need for the good enforcement work that is going on to be communicated more in the press and on social media, to deter people.
- 6.4 There was a discussion around alternative sources of energy. There was the example of a person wanting to have a small wind turbine on some land they own and how this could be achieved, perhaps working with the Council or other community organisations. An attendee asked if the Government still provided grants for solar panels.

### How do we act to help tackle climate change?

- 6.5 As part of the discussion, the group were asked what they or their family does to play a part in tackling climate change. Comments included;
- "I think most of us are using our cars less because we haven't been able to go anywhere."
- "Most of us do as much recycling as we can...."
- 6.6 Recycling was discussed, and questions were raised about why some materials cannot be recycled easily, for example bread bags. The ability to recycle old medication and tablets at local pharmacies was welcomed. The group were happy to go out of their way to recycle items that the Council currently are unable to.
- 6.7 There was a discussion about the way things were done in the past and how they could now be perceived as eco-friendly, for example hanging washing on the line, rather than using a tumble dryer, turning lights off and only boiling the water that you need etc. It was suggested that this should be taught in schools. The conversation then went on to suggest that there could be some form of intergenerational working, with older people visiting schools to discuss or produce a leaflet to communicate the key issues.

### What can communities do?

- 6.8 The group were not aware of many community sharing schemes in the County. One attendee suggested that they used to live in an area where there was an equipment sharing library and it would be good to pool resources and do

something locally here. Another attendee suggested that there is a community garden in Brynna Woods, where people can go in and pick up goods and also in Pontyclun.

- 6.9 Allotments were discussed as a means to grow your own food. Long waiting lists were reported and then a number of vacant sites were suggested that could be turned into allotments if needed. Indoor allotment sites in old factory buildings “Like a big glass house”, was one idea.
- 6.10 Communicating key messages was seen as important, with two examples given. Firstly, the cutting down of diseased trees, people are not aware and think that they are just being cut down, when on the other hand we should be planting more trees. The second example, was mention of the 50mph signs on the A470, which tell people the reason for the speed limit is to reduce air pollution, with the result that people are more informed.
- 6.11 The final point raised was the potential benefits of publicising the recycled products and things that are made out of recycled products? *“It’s amazing what they can make. If people knew what was being recycling and what it was being turned into, it could make a big difference.”*

## 7 Staff survey responses

- 7.1 An email was sent to all staff in RCT Council with a link to a question that asked for ideas on how the Council could tackle Climate Change within Council Services.

13 detailed Responses were received. A number of the comments are shown below, split by theme;

**If you have ideas about how we can do more to tackle Climate Change within any of our Council services, please let us know.**

### Plastic use

*"I think that as an organisation we need to commit to reducing our plastic consumption. When we were in the workplace, plastic was used a lot in things like packaging and catering (like coffee cups etc.) These are small changes that can make a big difference."*

*"Re-instate water machines in offices, to encourage staff to use less plastic bottles. Lots of people refuse to drink tap water."*

*"We need to find ways to change people's habits so that they will realise that small changes in the way we live, step-by-step, are easier than we think. Society must move away from over consumerism and realise that our ways are harmful to ourselves and the environment. We need to reduce, reuse and recycle. I find that many people are confused by what can be recycled and how. Perhaps we could find a way to teach residents the difference between the seven categories of plastic; which types can be recycled in the bags on the doorstep and alternative options for those that can't, how to look for the triangle and number symbol on the packaging."*

### Energy

*"We should commit to using only (or majority) renewable energy and ditch fossil fuels completely as an organisation."*

*"Lights-out policy on Council owned buildings after a set time to save energy (understood it is required for security reasons in some cases)."*

*"I work at Maesnewydd Garden Centre and we have a large greenhouse with a gas boiler. If that was replaced by solar panels and a small windmill to service an electric boiler that would be more beneficial to the planet and eventually would pay for itself by the reduction in our gas bills. We already have solar panels on our building's roof."*

### Catering

*"I think that catering needs to be considered when thinking about tackling climate change. Food being offered on RCT premises and services needs to be ethical, sustainable and eco-friendly. Reduce the amount of red meat and*

*dairy being sold and consumed. Increase the number of vegan and vegetarian options. Ensure that any meat, fish or dairy sold is sustainable.”*

### **Procurement**

*“We need to look at the procurement process and evaluate the sustainability and ethics of our contractors and organisations used. Maybe a commitment to have basic requirements for these contracts (must be sustainable, must be ethical etc.)”*

### **Remote Working/Reduce Office Space**

*“Discourage car journeys to attend meetings etc and encourage remote contact where possible”*

*“Reduction in office space footprint to encourage flexible working via hot-desk bookings”*

*“Continue with the home working where practicable.”*

*“Council office space could then be reduced which will save on heating/energy bills”*

### **Electric Cars**

*“Electric pool car fleet for employees where regular travel by car is essential.”*

*“Purchase electric vehicles and also install charge points at the main offices / car parks. This may also encourage staff to purchase electric vehicles”*

## 8 Email responses

8.1 Emails were received from the following:

- Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council
- Dr. Beth Winter – MP for Cynon Valley

8.2 The main points from the emails are found below;

### Hirwaun and Penderyn Community Council

#### Overview

Hirwaun and Penderyn Community Council welcomes this document. This council endorses and supports all meaningful action taken by RCTBC to address the unfolding Climate and Ecological crisis which HPCC recognises as potentially the greatest ever existential threat to our planet and its lifeforms.

At present, a resident searching the RCT website would not be rewarded with any wealth of information on the council's response to climate change and would certainly not be informed of a coherent policy relating to it. We hope that this consultation and survey will pave the way to addressing this issue.

#### Comments on the draft document

Members of HPCC:

- were encouraged by the breadth and variety of initiatives that have already been actioned. It was felt that the council should celebrate these and raise public awareness.
- felt that the chilling quotes from leaders and activists, set the correct tone for this important document.
- noted that document is titled a "Climate Change Strategy" but the content encompasses wider environmental issues. The final document may benefit from a title that reflects this.
- thought that there was confusion at times, between which targets/actions applied to the council itself and which to the borough at large. This could be addressed in the final draft.
- wished that the document had been given a more reader friendly layout/organisation. This may have encouraged more members of the public to read and engage with it. Again the final draft could accommodate this.
- welcomed RCTBC's intention to continue its dialogue with residents regarding this overwhelmingly urgent issue. HPCC councillors were keen to be represented in this ongoing process.
- hoped to see RCTBC to set up a panel with wide representation that would have the role of stimulating and challenging the council on climate and environmental issues.

- did not believe that the public are sufficiently well informed of the crisis. It was felt that RCTBC should embark on urgent and extensive campaigns of awareness raising.

## **Conclusion**

HPCC supports RCTBC in the aims of this document and would welcome the opportunity to work in partnership to further these aims.

## **Beth Winter – MP for Cynon Valley**

Please find below the outcome of discussions held with my advisory groups in Cynon Valley to the consultation document on Climate Change produced by the Local Authority. I would like to also highlight two areas that are of particular importance to me. These are:

- There is a need to ensure that there is clarity around how and when targets will be met. This is an ambitious document but I remain unsure about how one would move to implementation of targets that are set.
- Processes of consultation are understandably often difficult and complicated to arrange and manage but the existential nature of this issue is such that ensuring adequate, comprehensive, representative and meaningful involvement of residents, including as wide a range as possible of organisations, is of paramount importance. The document falls short I feel on this.

On a positive note I, and my advisory groups, very much welcome this initiative by RCTCBC. It is a comprehensive and serious attempt to seek to address issues of climate change and I look forward to working with you to progress this initiative to the benefit, in particular, of our future generations.

## **Consultation response by Beth Winter MP; Economy Advisory Group; Welfare Benefits Advisory Groups & Constitution Advisory Group.**

- Call for tighter legislation and clear enforcement on domestic & commercial burning. This would ideally go hand in hand with support for those who rely on burning solid fuel to incentivise and enable them to install greener heating methods.
- It's agreed that tone of consultation responses should reflect the positivity and ambition of the document.

- There is some confusion in the document between targets for RCT as an organisation and as a county borough council. This should be clarified. It is felt that there is a lack of detail on plans for how targets will be attained.
- Applaud that new- build houses will be carbon zero. RCT should use tools at their disposal to deliver widespread retrofitting scheme.
- RCT should work towards an integrated public & active transport network that complements the metro. Need to consider needs of more rural communities within RCT e.g. Rhigos, where public transport is virtually non-existent currently.
- RCT need to work rapidly on electric car charging points and communicate 'this is what we are doing', perhaps a named person to push this forward.
- Apprenticeship schemes should be used to up-skill local people on green infrastructure.
- Integration with Welsh Government to ensure a joined-up approach between WG & Local Authorities, with best practice spread and WG approach filtered down. Regular meetings between Julie James and named individuals at each local authority are suggested.
- Need to focus on e-bikes, mobility scooters and other forms of semi-active transport which are very energy efficient.
- Need a change of behaviour around waste. We applaud recycling where appropriate but need to move to less disposable elements on consumption. Need for a county borough wide emphasis on reducing and reusing.
- An emphasis throughout on a **fair transition**. Disincentives to drive are only going to hurt those who have no alternatives. Disincentives to burn solid fuel are only going to hurt those who rely on it. There need to be developed alternatives, financial support as appropriate and clear communication.
- Need to clarify consultation process – how and who is involved in the consultative body for RCT going forward – how representative is that body? Should Local Authorities also appoint Councillor for climate change?





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