



## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021

#### **DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY (2021-2025) CONSULTATION RESPONSES - FEEDBACK OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP AND THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

#### **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION IN CONSULTATION WITH COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS (CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPION)**

### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Cabinet with the feedback of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which met on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021, respectively, to consider a report on the Draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025) Consultation Responses.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report considered by the [Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group](#) and the [Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#);
- 2.2 Note the comments and observations of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group following consideration of the report at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021; and the comments and observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following pre-scrutiny of the report at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021 as referenced within the report.
- 2.3 Subject to 2.1 – 2.2 agree to the recommendations presented within the Draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025) Consultation Findings, which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report, and for ease of reference listed below:
- i. Request that Officers use the feedback to inform the development of the final Climate Change Strategy.
  - ii. Agree to support the approach of facilitating an ongoing climate change conversation with residents, local businesses and partners, linked to the final Climate Change Strategy workplan.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The need for Cabinet Members to be aware of the comments and observations of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to consideration of the Draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025) Consultation Responses.

### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Council's draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy has been subject to a comprehensive public consultation over two months to 31 May 2021.
- 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 in respect of the Council's carbon footprint and the carbon footprint for the County Borough.
- 4.3 It is recognised that scrutiny is a vital component of good governance and improves Councils' decision making, service provision and cost effectiveness. The undertaking of pre-scrutiny by the Overview and Committee and consideration by the Council's Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group in this area will strengthen accountability and assist Cabinet Members in taking any future decisions on these matters.

### **5. THE CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP**

- 5.1 The Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group met on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to consider a report on the Draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025) Consultation Responses.
- 5.2 The Steering Group acknowledged the work undertaken to establish the robust Strategy, which had incorporated the key topics discussed at its meetings:
- Biodiversity;
  - Community use of vacant/unused land;
  - Waste Management Strategy;
  - Local Procurement of Supplies and Services;
  - Elimination of single use plastics in all Council contracts and premises;
  - Taffs Well Thermal Spring;
  - Transportation;
  - Air Quality;
  - Energy Generation;
  - Nature's Assets; and
  - Strategic and Local Development Plans.
- 5.3 Members took the opportunity to thank officers for the wide-ranging consultation and continuing the on-going climate conversation with the residents of RCT.

- 5.4 One Member was disappointed to note the level of engagement by residents, despite the various online tools and platforms utilised by the Council but acknowledged the restrictions of a digital consultation process during a pandemic. The Member spoke of the importance of undertaking face-to-face consultation with residents in town centres, when safe to do so, to reach a wider audience.
- 5.5 Members spoke of the importance of exploring various social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, as well as utilising more traditional methods, such as email and letters to engage with a wide range of residents.
- 5.6 It was noted that the vast majority of respondents had indicated their concern about the impact of Climate Change in their local area and that that 81.9% of respondents felt that they didn't have enough information about the impact of climate change. Again, Members acknowledged that not all residents had participated in the survey to give a full picture but agreed that the information would act as a positive foundation for the Council to build upon as the overall understanding of climate change develops.
- 5.7 Members stressed the importance of continuing to engage, educate and involve residents in the Climate Change conversation going forward.

## **6. PRE SCRUTINY BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to undertake pre-scrutiny of the report on the Draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025) Consultation Responses.
- 6.2 Members welcomed the 'much needed' draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025), which had initiated a positive debate amongst the residents and businesses of RCT. They noted the appetite for green initiatives being undertaken by numerous community groups across the county borough but stressed the importance of coordinating the good work locally to avoid a 'scattergun approach'
- 6.3 One Member raised concern regarding the questioning within the consultation which they found to be too 'apple pie' and encouraged only the right responses. The Member felt that more could be done to engage with residents and businesses, asking harder and more challenging questions about the dis benefits and setting priorities.
- 6.4 Members made comments and sought assurance that ongoing climate conversations and the draft strategy would consider:
- Support for tree planting which would help mitigate against flooding;
  - Community groups purchasing woodland and developing urban garden projects;
  - Adopting national minimum standards for contractors and suppliers to encourage them to support the council to become carbon neutral;
  - Hydro schemes;

- Appropriate infrastructure to support and facilitate home EV charging and to investigate ways to realise on-street charging, how to make this feasible;
- Early discussions with developers to install EV facilities into all new builds

- 6.5 Members were keen to applaud that new- build houses will be carbon zero but acknowledged the number of older properties and homes across the county borough that would benefit from retrofit schemes to prevent them from ‘leaking energy’
- 6.6 One member was disappointed that only 56% of respondents thought that the Climate Commitments would help the Council to meet its carbon reduction targets.
- 6.7 Members agreed with the main themes identified within the consultation responses such as ‘everyone must play a part’ and ‘engagement and education’ with the suggestion that all councillors can play a key role in influencing their local communities and schools through their roles as Governors.
- 6.8 Committee recognised that this is the starting point of the climate change discussions with residents and businesses across RCT with further public engagement to follow.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from the report.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no equality or diversity implications as a result of the recommendations set out within the report.

## **9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no welsh language implications arising from the report.

## **10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

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

## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

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

## **12. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 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.

### **13. CONCLUSION**

- 13.1 The draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy has been subject to a comprehensive public consultation over the two months to 31 May 2021.
- 13.2 The Council's Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021, respectively, to consider its findings.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

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