



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE, FRONTLINE SERVICES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 29 September 2022 at 4.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor C Middle (Chair)

Councillor J Barton Councillor V Dunn
Councillor E L Dunning Councillor G Holmes
Councillor W Hughes Councillor R Yeo

Officers in attendance:-

Mr J Bailey, Head of Planning
Mr S Humphreys, Head of Legal Services
Mr S Owen, Service Director – Streetcare
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr A Roberts, Head of Energy & Carbon Reduction
Mr R Waters, Director – Frontline Services
Mrs S Handy – Members' Researcher & Scrutiny Officer
Mr C Hanagan – Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications

External Representatives:-

Ms K Clarke – Transport For Wales
Mr Holder – Transport For Wales

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the first meeting of the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee and thanked everyone for attending.

2 Apologies

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillors A. Rogers, G. Jones and D. Grehan.

3 **Scrutiny Research**

The Members' Researcher and Scrutiny Officer referenced the research facilities that were available to Members within the Council Business Unit. Members were advised that if they have any specific queries to email them to Scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk.

4 **Declaration of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declaration of interests received.

5 **DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23 AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communications presented the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme 2022-23 to Members in order to seek Members' comments and approval on the draft Work Programme for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

Members were reminded that the Scrutiny Work Programmes allows for a flexible approach to recognise the needs of emerging priorities and provides opportunity for Scrutiny Working Groups to be taken forward and training provided where requested. Members were reminded that this is a fluid document and may be subject to changes throughout the year.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme 2022-23.

6 **Welsh transport appraisal Guidance (WeITAG) 2022**

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications introduced the report to Members and advised that Scrutiny's response to the consultation will be collated and reported back to the Welsh Government. Following this, Kate Clark from Transport for Wales provided Members with an overview of the consultation through the use of a power point presentation.

The Chair thanked Kate Clark for the presentation and informed Members that he would be going through each consultation question on an individual basis.

Discussion ensued around each question as follows:

Question 1:

WeITAG 2022 places less emphasis on the use of cost-benefit ratios, and

more emphasis on well-being appraisal based on the ambitions and targets in the Wales Transport Strategy. Do you have any comments on this approach?

Scrutiny Members felt that there are benefits to a cost benefits ratio but also agreed that there are places where that wider well-being objective needs to be reflected in proposals. Members expressed concerns that the well-being would be taking over the cost ratios but agreed on the value at looking at the well-being too. Members reflected the importance of looking long term and looking at alternative approaches.

Question 2:

WelTAG 2022 introduces a new Stage 0 Case for Change and suggests that it should be done by the in-house team. Do you have comments on this?

Members felt that there needs to be accountability and scrutiny as the programmes continue. Members agreed that it should be done by in house teams, however, it was noted that this is reliant on resources. As Democratically Elected Councillors, Members agreed that they are best placed for this given that they all have links in their own communities and their own areas.

Question 3:

Would it be beneficial to use WelTAG at a strategic or programme level? If so, what types of transport interventions might best benefit from a strategic WelTAG approach?

Yes, Members agreed that WelTAG should be used at a more strategic level.

Question 4:

WelTAG 2022 provides guidance on aligning transport planning and land use planning. What are the key issues and how could we address them in the guidance?

Members agreed that we need to be working in one overall strategic way by looking at the long term outcomes of a programme and considering the planning outcomes of the project. Members agreed on the importance of looking at all the factors surrounding someone's well-being such as environmental factors. The infrastructure and planning aspects need to tie into the process and work together.

Question 5:

WelTAG 2022 introduces a proportionate approach to appraisal through three levels of detail – WelTAG lite, WelTAG standard and WelTAG plus. Most projects in Wales, including most active travel projects, should use WelTAG lite. Do you have comments on this approach?

Members had concerns that by using WelTAG lite it may mean that things are missed which are covered in WelTAG Plus.

Question 6:

We are developing technical guidance to accompany the main guidance. Can you suggest specific tables or templates that would be helpful? Which particular topics would benefit from further guidance?

Members felt that behaviour type projects would benefit from support and guidance.

Question 7:

Do you have any other comments or feedback on the draft WelTAG 2022 guidance?

No additional comments.

Question 8:

Do you have any suggestions for how the governance of WelTAG might be improved in order to ensure that studies are high quality, meet the needs of users and represent good value for money?

Members agreed that the consultation itself shows transparency and is a part of the democratic process.

Question 9:

We would like to know your views on the effects that WelTAG 2022 would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated

Members agreed on the importance of raising the accessibility of the Welsh language. The more that people travel by public transport the more they hear and see the language. The more that is used

bilingually the better it will be to enhance the use of the Welsh language. Its about using the language on an every day basis and normalising it for the rest of the population. Transport is critical in culture and language.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED**:

- For Scrutiny's response to be submitted to Welsh Government by the consultation deadline of the 3rd November 2022.

7 National Transport Delivery Plan: 2022-2027

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications presented his report to Members and informed them that the feedback from today's meeting will be collated and sent over to Welsh Government.

Following this, Mr Andy Holder from Transport for Wales, gave Members an overview of the consultation through the use of a power point presentation.

The Chair thanked Mr Holder for providing the Committee with a detailed overview and informed Members that he would deal with each question in order and on an individual basis.

Question 1:

The Chair commented that there wasn't enough detail regarding what was in the Plan to enable Members to answer the questions.

Discussions continued and another Member commented that the cost of public transport will prohibit the Council achieving Net Zero and advised that if we are to make it more sustainable then the cost of transport has to be addressed. Another Member agreed with this comment and stressed that Members need more detail regarding the Plan in order to enable them to answer the questions. The Member pointed out that in Germany residents can travel where they want for only £3 a day and that something similar is needed in this Country.

Mr Holder advised Members that there is a section in the NDTP on fairer fares. It is being addressed under the Plan. The Director of Frontline Services pointed out that when the Welsh Government took over the core valley lines, it looked at flattening the fares. The Fares are the same now whether you come from Treherbet or Pontypridd. However, communities in Rhondda Fach now feel even further away from Cardiff because they potentially have to catch a bus to catch a train therefore making residents pay the combination of the two fares. The Director also emphasised that another big push is around integrated transport and that the key from that is how you distribute the revenue to the rail and bus organisations.

Discussions continued and a Member commented that the whole challenge with consultations is that if the Welsh Government are still working on what fairer fares mean then this negates the purpose of the consultation.

The Chair also noted that the well being of the community is key and that travel has to be convenient and quick for people to use it.

The Director of Frontline Services advised that if there is a funding commitment from the Welsh Government then it sets the right framework for further development.

Another Member pointed out that the 20mph speed limit will also mean that there will be a lot more buses on the roads. The Chair agreed and noted that this could also be a bigger emphasis towards electronic vehicles such as bikes etc.

The Chair pointed out that it's disappointing that we got rid of trams and that we are almost going back to where we were with the trams in the valleys.

The Chair felt that further information was needed on the Delivery Plan and requested a bullet point summary from the Director of Frontline Services.

Question 2 and Question 3:

Members felt that they didn't have enough detail to enable them to answer any more questions. The Director of Frontline Services advised that Officers have drafted answers to the questions and that these can be circulated to Members following meeting.

The Chair noted that the Director of Frontline Services will give a summary and Members will have the opportunity to respond. The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications advised that officers will capture a proposed response from Scrutiny and will give Members the opportunity to answer each individual question.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to:

- Respond to the attached [consultation](#), contained within the draft National Transport Delivery Plan 2022-27 and decide whether they wish to make any further comments or suggestions as appropriate following further information from The Director of Frontline Services.

8 Community infrastructure levy annual monitoring Report

The Head of Planning presented his report to Members to seek Committee's comments to be forwarded onto Cabinet in respect of the

contents of the CIL Annual Monitoring Report and the Regulation 123 List.

Following this, Members had the opportunity to scrutinise the report.

A Member queried the items on the list and noted that a lot of them have been longstanding and questioned whether there was a timescale for them. The Head of Planning noted that the list of education and transportation schemes identified within the Regulation 123 List are the schemes that the Council have identified as strategic priorities.

They have to be on the Regulation 123 List to be able to use CIL monies towards their cost (either in full, or part). The Member responded back and noted that some items on the list may actually never happen.

The Head of Planning noted that if a scheme isn't on the list then it's not something that the Council have identified as a strategic priority.

Another Member sought clarification of the project at the top of the 'Education Projects' list regarding Mwyndy/Talbot Green and questioned if that is based on CIL money from other schemes that is needed. The Head of Planning advised that the order of those schemes on the Regulation 123 List isn't in priority order.

The List does reflect those sites where the Council has made allocations within the Local Development Plan or planning permission has been granted. It was further confirmed by the Head of Planning that CIL is only payable when full planning permission or reserved matters consent (pursuant to an outline planning permission) has been granted and development starts.

Discussions ensued and the Chair queried whether a CIL charge on social housing developments applied in the South of the County Borough. The Head of Planning advised that one of the exemptions that can be claimed against a CIL levy charge is social housing relief. Accordingly, if it's a social housing scheme and social housing relief is sought and granted then we don't get any CIL monies as a consequence of the development. The Chair expressed his concern regarding the sum of money going to some town/community councils in the South of the county borough where in the Rhondda there are no town councils. There are no ongoing CIL generating developments to mitigate the ongoing parking issues or highways issues as a result of social housing development. The Head of Planning advised that the CIL monies are supposed to address strategic priorities and issues. If there are site specific issues as a consequence of the development then it is legitimate to seek a section 106 agreement to deal with those site specific issues.

The Head of Planning also noted that the charging schedule was adopted by RCT at the end of 2014, and the world has changed since then in terms of building costs and viability. The Head of Planning advised that in

conjunction with the work currently underway to review the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) the Council will also review the CIL Charging Schedule to ensure that a balance is struck between the need to raise CIL monies to deliver infrastructure projects and ensure as far as possible the viability of new development schemes throughout the whole of the county borough.

The Chair questioned whether there was scope for the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee to investigate the planning permissions that have been granted over the recent years in respect of the the selling off of Council school sites which then resulted in new developments and the impact that may have had on the surrounding community; and also the extent to which any section 106 agreements had been imposed as part of those permissions. The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication advised that a lot of the specifics are directed by legislation and where there are Council specific policies there is scope for this committee to scrutinise those policies and make recommendations to the Executive, however, the Service Director advised that a lot of it is prescribed in terms of how we need to approach the requirements. The Head of Planning noted his agreement.

Discussions continued and a Member referred back to the charging schedule being adopted in 2014 and noted that at that time Members felt that the Tonyrefeil area was set too low and queried if this is reviewed regularly. The Head of Planning advised that the CIL Charging Schedule will be reviewed in conjunction with the ongoing LDP Review.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) Endorse the CIL Annual Monitoring Report (Appendix A).
- (2) Endorse the Regulation 123 List (Appendix B) for publication on the Council website for a period of 28 days and consultation as set out in paragraph 5.6.
- (3) Endorse the subsequent adoption of the Regulation 123 List if no adverse comments are received.

9 UPDATE REPORT ON THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STRATEGY, "IMPLEMENTATION PLAN"

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications outlined the history of this piece of work, particularly its journey through the Overview & Scrutiny Committee pre-pandemic and the strategy then being introduced to the last Overview & Scrutiny Committee just before the local elections.

The Director of Corporate Estates presented his report in respect of Electric Vehicle Charging "Implementation Plan" to Members prior to it going to the Climate Change Sub Committee on the 3rd October. Following this, the Head of Carbon Energy Reduction provided Members with an overview of the plan and where the Council is currently at to date.

Following the overview, Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions.

A Member queried if the strategy is just effecting Council buildings or does it go wider throughout the County Borough. The Member emphasised that if it goes wider then it will take a lot of investment to bring the infrastructure throughout our communities, especially in the Rhondda Valleys. The cables and infrastructure in the Rhondda Valleys are not suitable to take the massive increase in electricity. The Member added that a lot of properties would need a complete upgrade and questioned who would pay for that. The Member emphasised that hybrid vehicles should be the way forward for now. The Chair agreed and noted the challenges ahead.

The Director of Corporate Estates replied and noted that the strategy is meant to be for the County Borough. The Director noted that the Council wont be providing residents with electric for their vehicles in the same way they don't provide fuel for their vehicles now. However, they will put an Electric Vehicle infrastructure in place in RCT and there are ambitions to put a publicly accessible charger within one mile of every resident. The Council is looking at destination charging and workplace charging. The Chair emphasised that Members have queried the infrastructure needed if people start to have their own charging points. A Member agreed that there should be a halfway point where Members go to a hybrid approach first. The Chair noted that the other issue is the technology in place. A further Member noted that she supports the strategy but emphasised her agreement that the communication hasn't been right with the residents of RCT. The Member noted that residents haven't been advised that they wont have electric vehicle charging points in their homes and that they will have to walk a mile away to charge their car. The Member noted that this will not be popular and further questioned how we embed this in the planning system. A further Member emphasised that many people habent got gardens big enough to park their cas in and haven't got gardens that back on to a lane. The Member noted that this leaves residents needing to charge their cars on the street where they simply do not have the permission to park the car anyway. The Member noted that due to electricity costs this may only be 1p a mile cheaper to run than the petrol cars.

Discussions continued and a Member queried what type of charging points are being provided as there are super fast charging points and standard charging points. This will be difficult to sell to residents. The Chair noted that the aim of this report is to endorse the implementation plan that is going to the Climate Change Sub Committee on the 3rd October. The Chair suggested putting this item on the Work Programme at a later date taking into consideration other factors in respect of infrastructure and the issues raised by Members. Members agreed.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED**:

- To endorse the Implementation Plan and Associated Action Plan for submission to the next Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee; and,
- To review the practicalities of the Implementation Plan at a Committee meeting scheduled at a later date and to amend the Work Programme to reflect this change.

10 Green Waste Collections

The Service Director, Streetcare and the Waste Services, Strategic & Ops Officer provided Members with an overview of their report in respect of updating Members on green waste collections following the implementation of sack collections and the 'RCT's Got A Brand New Bag' campaign.

Discussions ensued and Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions.

A Member queried how much consultation and feedback has there been from residents who actually use this service, has there been focus groups of people who should be using the service about why they aren't using it and how much can the Council do in terms of campaigning to get residents to do this recycling. The Member also pointed out that on a recent visit to the recycling centre there was several plastic bags in the green waste collection centre and there were no signage at all on the containers prohibiting this.

The Service Director, Streetcare responded by advising Members that over the last 2 years the team has had negligible awareness because they haven't been out knocking on doors due to Covid, however, they have now started to focus on target areas with low participation in order to raise awareness. In respect of Community Recycling Centres, Staff have been advised that they cannot monitor it all the time but the Service Director emphasised that it is a low minority of residents that do this. The Service Director also acknowledged what was said in respect of signage and agreed to make improvements in this area. In terms of the consultation and feedback, they have had very little adverse feedback other than in the initial stages where people don't like change, however, this has recently settled down and people seem to be happy with the scheme. The Chair pointed out that a visit to the recycling centre will also be upcoming for Members of the Scrutiny Committee. The Service Director also pointed out that the Education Centre has now re-opened so schools are now welcome to visit.

The Director of Frontline Services pointed out the quality of the green waste that is now sent for processing has improved since the removal of plastic bags for collections and replacement with reusable sacks.. The Director also emphasised that this has taken 3 million single use plastic bags out of circulation in RCT and it is important to look at whether this can be rolled out more widely. The Chair commented that he would like to see RCT Staff Workers not having to recycle on the kerbside like a lot of other Authorities do and that RCT's recycling is superb.

The Chair thanked the Officers for the continuous innovation and moving things forward.

Following this, Members **RESOLVED** to note the update in respect of green waste collection in RCT.

11 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to report.

12 CHAIRS REVIEW AND CLOSE

The Chair thanked Members for attending the meeting and for contributing to such a constructive discussion. The Chair also reminded Members that the next meeting will be held on the 26th October 2022 at 5pm.

This meeting closed at 6.30 pm

**COUNCILLOR C MIDDLE
CHAIR.**