



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE
Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee meeting held on
Tuesday, 6 December 2022 at 3.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Crimmings Councillor R Lewis
Councillor M Norris

Officers in attendance

Mr P Mee, Chief Executive
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Ms L Lawson, Performance Manager
Ms E Dean, Environment Planner
Mr R Wistow, Ecologist
Mr J Arroyo, Energy & Carbon Reduction Manager
Mr P Dukes, Principal Carbon Reduction Officer

11 Welcome and Apology

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and an apology for absence was received from County Borough Councillor J Barton.

12 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

13 Minutes

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2022 as an accurate record.

The Chair informed Members that a date would be circulated in due course for the visit to the local peat sites.

14 Hydro Electric Generation at Treforest Weir

The Director of Corporate Estates provided the Sub-Committee with an overview of feasibility work completed for the development of a low-head Hydro Electric Scheme at Treforest Weir on the River Taff, Treforest, Pontypridd. The report was based on a preliminary feasibility report produced by a specialist company that reviews the hydropower options at Treforest Weir.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language thanked the Director for the report and commented that RCT and the wider valleys were blessed with an abundance of water and that it made sense to look at the water as a possible source of green energy generation. The Cabinet

Member felt it was an exciting and positive step forward and looked forward to future updates.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity echoed the previous comments and asked Members to look for similar projects in their local areas. The Cabinet Member spoke of the increase in cost of energy, which made such projects more viable and agreed that selling the energy through private wire would increase the amount of savings.

In response to the Cabinet Member's comments, the Director informed Members that an all-encompassing report with information on approximately 30 potential sites within RCT would be presented to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

The Chair sought clarification on the terminology 'private wires' and it was explained that 'private wire' is used to differentiate between the wire coming from Western Power or National Grid. The Director hoped that the wire would be to a Council owned property, to maximise the use of the energy generated and explained that for every KW used, the Council would not have to buy it from the grid at the quadruple rates.

The Chair thanked the Director for the informative report and the Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the report as part of the works agenda of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee;
2. To further expenditure in the development of the proposals, as detailed in section 10.3, to undertake further design studies to assess full potential and develop detailed project proposals; and
3. To receive further progress reports, at appropriate intervals, in the development of the proposals.

15 Hydro Electric Generation at Dare Valley Country Park

The Director of Corporate Estates provided the Sub-Committee with an overview of feasibility work completed for the development of a high-head Hydro Electric Generation Scheme at Dare Valley Country Park. The report was based on a feasibility study produced by a specialist company that reviewed the viability of a previously considered scheme.

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure spoke positive of the project and commented on the favourable return and the continuous supply of water at the site, even in a drought. The Cabinet Member spoke of the various on-site options to generate energy, such as Dare Valley Country Park Hotel complex, café and caravan park and looked forward to future updates following the feasibility studies and consultation.

For Members' information, the Energy & Carbon Reduction Manager provided a brief overview of the difference between a high-head and a low-head Hydro Electric Generation Scheme. Members were informed that low-head consists of low pressure but large volumes, whereas high-head consists of low volume but high pressure.

The Chair thanked the Director for the report and the Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the contents of the report as part of the works agenda of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee;
2. To further expenditure in the development of these proposals, as detailed within section 10.2 of the report, to undertake further design studies which assess the full potential of the project and to help develop detailed project proposals; and
3. To receive further progress reports, at appropriate intervals, in the development of the proposals.

16 Update Report on the Carbon Footprint Project and Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Report for 2021-2022

The Director of Corporate Estates provided the Sub-Committee with an update on the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Reporting Scheme and Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's submission under that regime for the Financial Year 2021/22.

The Principal Carbon Reduction Officer explained that the scheme was still evolving, hence the Welsh Government had introduced three additional carbon emission reporting requirements from 2021/22 namely:

- Staff Business Travel
- Staff Commuting
- Home Working

The officer paid tribute to colleagues across the Local Authority, who now had to collect data, when there was previously no need.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity took the opportunity to thank the officers for the tremendous amount of work undertaken in not only gathering the information, but for producing the user-friendly Dashboard.

The Chair echoed the comments and expressed her gratitude to officers for undertaking the work in such a timely manner.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language commented on the quality of the data, which would allow Members and Officers to track progress and increase efforts to decarbonise as a Local Authority. The Cabinet Member noted the changes introduced by Welsh Government in terms of the recording of emissions requirements but felt that the overall picture was that emissions were reducing, despite the embedded emissions being in the supply chain. The Cabinet Member was pleased to note initiatives such as the Council's bid to Welsh Government for the construction of new schools, one of which had a fully funded net zero option.

The Chair thanked the Director for the report and the Sub-Committee
RESOLVED:

1. To note the contents of the report as part of the ongoing work under the remit of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee;
2. To publish the data on the Councils Carbon Footprint Dashboard; and

3. To receive further reports providing additional updates on progress as / when deemed appropriate.

17 RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy

The Director of Prosperity and Development provided the Sub-Committee with the opportunity to consider the responses to the consultation on the draft RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy.

Furthermore, the Director informed the Sub-Committee of the feedback and comments of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee following its pre-scrutiny of the Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Strategy at its meeting on the 15th November 2022.

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure was disappointed by the lack of public engagement with the consultation but valued the comments made by those who did respond and the Scrutiny Committee members. The Cabinet Member emphasised the importance of tree planting, both in urban areas and in parks.

The Chair thanked the Director for the report and highlighted the importance of looking after the current trees and hedgerows, as well as planting new.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the comments and observations of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee; and
2. To endorse the Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy.

18 The Council's S6 Biodiversity Duty: Three Year Report to Welsh Government 2020-2022

The Director of Prosperity and Development provided the Sub-Committee with an update on the progress in developing and implementing the Council's S.6 Biodiversity Duty Action Plan; and sought approval to submit the Action Plan to Welsh Government and to publicise it on the Council's website as required by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The Chair thanked the Director for the report and thanked the officers for the work behind the scenes.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information contained within the report and the progress made to integrate consideration of biodiversity into all Council services, since the last formal report in 2019; and
2. To endorse the report and Appendix A for submission to Welsh Government and for inclusion on the Council's website.

This meeting closed at 3.35 pm

**C Leyshon
Chair.**