



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL
CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee held on Thursday, 23 March 2023 at 1.00 pm.

This meeting was recorded, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:

Councillor C Leyshon (Chair)

Councillor A Crimmings Councillor R Lewis

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates

Ms L Lawson, Performance Manager

Mr A Roberts, Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction

Mr C Davies, Corporate Policy & Consultation Manager

Mr L Marengi, Performance and Strategic Climate Change Officer

Apologies for absence

Councillor M Norris Councillor J Barton

19 Declaration of Interest

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

20 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2022 as an accurate reflection.

21 RCT Climate Change Engagement Plan (2023-2025)

The Corporate Policy and Consultation Manager provided the Sub-Committee with the Climate Change Engagement Plan, which outlined how the Council proposed to communicate and involve stakeholders in developing its approach to working together to achieve its climate targets.

The plan set out how the Council intends to engage with residents, schools, businesses, staff and the third sector on considering greener and more sustainable lifestyle choices whilst raising the profile and increasing awareness about climate change.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank the officer and colleagues for the work undertaken to produce the robust Engagement Plan before Members. The Chair

was encouraged to note the RCT Climate Change Engagement Plan would seek to engage with residents, schools, businesses, staff and the third sector and cover the wider community and individuals.

The Chair highlighted the importance of the Council staff, 80% of which live within the County Borough, and commended them for contributing to the ambitious climate targets outlined within the report.

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure echoed the Chair's comments and thanked the officer for the excellent report. The Cabinet Member emphasised the importance of engaging with young people and was of the view that their enthusiasm would be key in helping the Council meet its target. The Cabinet Member stated that she was encouraged by the thorough plan, which would see all areas of the Local Authority working together.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language praised the meaningful involvement from RCT staff and was pleased to see that their comments and suggestions had been taken on board. The Cabinet Member was of the view that the Council should further seek to influence other public sector bodies that operate within the County Borough to contribute to the wider decarbonisation of RCT.

The Director of Corporate Estates advised the Cabinet Member that collaborative work with other organisations within RCT was already taking place. The Director advised that work was underway with both the Local Health Board and Transport for Wales.

The Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information contained in the report and the proposed engagement approach;
2. To approve the approach outlined; and
3. To develop the approach going forward and deliver on the communications and engagement activity, there is a need for existing staff support, initially provided by the named responsible officers, working in partnership with key environmental stakeholders.

22 Corporate Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan

The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction provided Members of the Sub-Committee with the draft Corporate 'Decarbonisation Strategy' and embedded 'Action Plan', the aim of which was to provide a clear pathway, with defined timescales, to assist the Council in delivering upon its target of achieving Carbon Neutral status by 2030.

The Chair thanked the officer for the comprehensive report. The Chair spoke of the ambitious targets and emphasised the huge scale of the Council's operations, explaining that there were 359 sites, 600+ fleet vehicles, 10,829 full time members of staff and 423KM² of land covered.

The Chair praised the idea of zoning patches of social care and commented that the need for a vehicle can limit the number of carers employed by the Council. The Chair was also pleased to note that a future initiative would be to consider healthier meals options across schools, care homes and offices.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language took the opportunity to thank officers for the considerable amount of work undertaken to produce the fit for purpose and user-friendly Action Plan before Members. The Cabinet Member commented that the ambitious Plan would be useful for residents and Members to track the decarbonisation progress.

The Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To note and comment upon the contents of the report and the Council's draft Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan;
2. To consider the draft Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan as providing the pathway for the Council to:
 - a) Meet its stated carbon reduction targets as published in the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2022-2025
 - b) Contribute in response to the nationally declared climate and nature emergencies.
3. To maintain and prioritise the Decarbonisation debate, to increase and/or vary the speed and scope of the Council's Decarbonisation work, and to recognise the need for all stakeholders to work together to make a positive difference; and
4. To receive regular updates on progress and to amend the action plan as appropriate to ensure we remain on target to meet our ambitions.

23 Hydro Electric Generation in RCT

The Director of Corporate Estates provided the Sub-Committee with an overview of an updated viability report, completed by a specialist company, for the development of small-scale hydroelectric power schemes within the boundaries of the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The historical, wide-ranging, report had recently been the subject of an internal review.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank officers and graduates, who were now full-time employees of the Council, for identifying the potential small-scale hydropower schemes across Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Chair was excited by the prospect of the three successful sites, which had been recommended to take forward into a full feasibility study and voiced her support.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language echoed the Chair's comments and was pleased to note that following a review requested by Elected Members, hydro-generation was back on the Council's energy generation agenda. The Cabinet Member spoke of the huge potential for hydro electric generation within RCT due to the weather and topography and commented that he would look forward to future updates.

The Cabinet Member kindly requested that officers liaise with all Local Members in respect of any successful schemes, which would further promote the Council's decarbonisation activities within local communities.

The Climate Change Cabinet 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 agree further expenditure in the development of the proposals, as detailed in sections 6 and 11, to undertake further survey works and feasibility studies, to assess full potential and develop further project proposals; and
 3. To receive further periodic updates on the progress of the proposals, either collectively, or on a 'case by case' basis.

24 Proposed Solar Farm

The Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction provided the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee with a further update with regards to the work underway in the development of a 'Land Based Solar Farm', to be located on Council owned land located at Coed Ely, on an 84-acre 'terraced' former colliery site, near Tonyrefail. The facility will, when constructed, be an asset owned by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

The Chair thanked the officer for the information. The Chair was pleased with the progress of the proposed solar farm and highlighted that the project would 'offset' around 55,000 tonnes of Carbon over the expected 35yr 'minimum' lifecycle of the project.

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure commented that the report was yet another exciting project and commended officers for their work. The Cabinet Member felt that such schemes identified by the Council would be an important talking point for school children and key for their futures.

The Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the report as part of the ongoing work in response to our climate change ambitions and agree to the further progress of the project proposals, in line with the content of the report; and
2. To receive further report(s) to provide updates on progress as/when deemed appropriate.

This meeting closed at 1.40 pm

**Councillor C Leyshon
Chair.**