



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, 1 February 2024 at 5.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors – The following Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Councillors were present online:-

Councillor G L Warren	Councillor P Binning
Councillor V Dunn	Councillor W Hughes
Councillor G Jones	Councillor A O Rogers
Councillor R Yeo	Councillor P Evans

Officers in attendance:-

Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr S Williams, Director for Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services
Mr P Dukes, Principal Carbon Reduction Officer
Mr A Roberts, Head of Energy & Carbon Reduction
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr D James, Service Director, Prosperity & Development
Mr A Griffiths, Service Director Highways and Engineering
Mrs J Mynott, Head of Infrastructure Asset Management
Mr T Phillips, Head of Traffic and Transportation
Mrs S Handy, Members Researcher & Scrutiny Officer

County Borough Councillors in attendance:-

Councillor A Crimmings, Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure
Councillor M Norris, Cabinet Member for Development & Prosperity

Apologies for absence

Councillor C Middle	Councillor J Barton
Councillor E L Dunning	Councillor G Holmes

41 Welcome

The Vice Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting.

42 Apologies

Apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillors C. Middle, J. Barton and E. Dunning.

43 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.

44 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Yeo declared the following interest in respect of agenda item 5: "My employer is 'National Grid Energy Distribution' (Formerly known as Western Power Distribution). I work for the Projects East team, which looks after Major Projects construction. These tend to be large scale projects. So, I am not directly involved with 'Ev charging'. I am also in Administration and have no, 'decision making role'. So, it would be a 'Personal Interest'".

45 CONSULTATIONS

The Members' Researcher & Scrutiny Officer referenced the consultation links, which were available through the 'RCT Scrutiny' website. Members were reminded that information is provided in respect of relevant consultations for consideration by the Committee, which are circulated on a monthly basis and updated on a fortnightly basis.

46 THINK CLIMATE RCT' THE COUNCIL'S TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2022-2025

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications presented his report on the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2022-2025. The Service Director provided an overview and set out the Council's progress in delivering the Council's Climate Change Strategy, '[Think Climate RCT](#)' as agreed in June 2022.

Discussions ensued and the Vice Chair queried how the Council is working with the private sector to reduce the Carbon Footprint throughout the County Borough. The Service Director advised that this could potentially be a piece of work for the Committee to look into in the future and emphasised the agreement of the Senior Leadership Team that whilst the Council can reduce its Carbon Footprint, it is important to work collaboratively with the private sector to achieve Climate Change aims.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED**:

- i. To consider the information contained within the report.
- ii. To take a view on the potential areas for further consideration as part of the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme.
- iii. To note the work to progress and further embed the Council's response to Climate Change into the business of the Council as part of the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan.
- iv. To consider whether Members wish to scrutinise in greater depth any matters contained in the report in line with the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

EV CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN COUNCIL ASSETS

The Director of Corporate Estates and the Head of Carbon Reduction Officer presented the report to Members and provided an update on progress made in the field of Electric Vehicle Charging, within Council Assets, in working towards to the Council's publicly stated EV charging goals. The Director also provided Members with a Power Point presentation in respect of EV Charging points throughout the County Borough.

Discussions ensued and a Member queried how closely the Council is working with car manufacturers to find out how EV Charging is developing and progressing. The Director of Corporate Estates advised that we are engaging with the Director of Cardiff City Region who do a lot of research in this area and also advised that the Council has a piece of software to enable to measure and manage the demand for EV chargers. The Head of Energy and Carbon reduction also advised that the Council works closely with TfW in this area and that the software predicts future trends in EV Charging and transport in general. Members were advised that a company called Senex, which is UK Government sponsored, works with all the manufacturing bodies as well to monitor trends in this area. This guidance is used to inform the Council's investment profile going forward. The Member further queried that if we were to look 5 years in advance what is this information telling us. The Officers advised that they would access the data and come back to the Member with information.

Discussions ensued and a Member query if one EV Charging point in Ty Elai car park is sufficient and also queried whether EV Charging bays in Trealaw cemetery would be for public use or Officer use. In respect of Ty Elai, Members were advised that recently EV charges have been installed that will be ready for Fleet and the public. With regards to Trealaw, Members were advised that it is intended for Fleet use but there are two bays there that will also be made available for public use as well.

Discussions continued and a Member queried if there was a long term plan to have EV Charging points at Schools, hospitals and GP surgeries and also queried if there was a plan in place to provide communities that don't have public car parks with EV Charging points. The Director of Corporate Estates advised that we have a design brief for all new Schools in the County Borough and there is also a process of rolling out EV Charging to other suitable Schools in conjunction with Education colleagues. In respect of hospitals/GP surgeries, the Director confirmed that the Council does work in collaboration with the Health Board but that it would not be the Council who would install the EV Charging points. In respect of communities that do not have public car parks, the Director confirmed that there is a good coverage of EV points so far and that this installation will continue. The Director further confirmed that they are also in the process of installing fast rapid charges in Town Centres too. It was also confirmed that there are talks ongoing to liaise with community centres to also install EV Charging points.

Another Member queried what the legality is of installing a EV Charging line in Terraced house. With regard to private resident charging, Members were advised that the Council has no remit to be able to provide this but also advised that the National Grid have advised that anyone who wants to charge their vehicle at home the power can be provided for them. The problem in terraced

houses is not having a dedicated parking space outside their property and that this raises Health and Safety concerns in respect of charging cables. The Director of Frontline Services advised that you could potentially charge your car from a Terraced house but there is not a designated parking space or you could create a trip hazard or create a situation where emergency vehicles are restricted from accessing the terraced street. The Director of Frontline Services emphasised that the complexities around it are significant and there is a duty on the Council to also protect highway users.

Another Member queried what the cost is to the Council of installing EV Chargers per unit. The Director of Corporate Estates advised that they do not have the information to hand but will obtain the information and distribute it by email following the meeting. Members were advised that the Council has been fortunate up until now to obtain CCR and Welsh Government grant funding.

The Vice Chair welcomed further comment from the Principal Carbon Reduction Officer in respect of earlier discussion. It was confirmed that by 2030 it will be required to have just over 1500 charge points in RCT. and at the moment there is approximately 110 in RCT.

Discussions continued and a Member advised that for someone to have EV Charging in their house it would require a substantial power upgrade. The Director of Corporate Estates advised that he recently met with an Officer from the National Grid and was reassured that their 5 year plan is regularly reviewed and that a wealth of information about EV Charging is available on their website. Members were also informed that the National Grid have made a connectivity pledge and that this makes it easier for all customers to install EV Charging and heat pumps.

Another Member pointed to how fast modern technology advances and queried if the Council is monitoring the developments as one day it may be that EV Charging points are no longer required. The Director of Corporate Estates acknowledged the speed at which progress is happening in the industry and are proportionate in what we are doing and every decision made is informed by the data coming back from current EV Charging points.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED**:

- i. To note the contents of this report, and an accompanying presentation, as part of the ongoing work in response to the Council's EV charging ambitions set by the Climate Change Strategy and the EV Charging Strategy and Implementation Plan.
- ii. To receive further report(s) to provide updates on progress as/when deemed appropriate.

48 The Welsh Government 20mph Speed Limit Roll Out

The Head of Traffic and Transportation presented his report to Members and gave a Power Point Presentation in respect of the Welsh Government's 20mph Speed Limit Roll Out in RCT.

Following the presentation, Members had the opportunity to ask questions. A Member queried if there had been a big cost to the Authority in respect of the

vandalism of signage and queried if in RCT residents will have more of a say on speed restrictions on roads in their own communities. Members were advised that the Deputy Minister has recently advised residents to actively engage with Local Authorities in respect of their opinions on road restrictions in their area. In respect of vandalism, the Head of Traffic advised that fortunately it has mainly been paint spray so the cost to the Authority has been minimal.

Discussions continued and a Member noted the importance of the Committee having a further review in 12 months time in respect of seeing the impact on road accidents and deaths in our communities and the Member also emphasised the importance of reviewing the impact on journey times being reduced for buses and taxi drivers and the impact this has on their income.

Another Member queried if there was an opportunity to have more road signs put up. Members were advised that like the old 30mph signs, the Council is committed to the signage at the entrance and the road markings and that the Council cannot erect repeat 20mph signs unless there is no street lighting.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED**:

- i. To consider the contents of the report;
- ii. To consider whether they wish to scrutinise further the impact the scheme has had on the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT); and,
- iii. To receive a further report to Scrutiny in the 2024/25 Municipal Year outlining the impact that the scheme is having on public transport and residents in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

49 Highways Investment Scheme

The Service Director, Highways and Engineering presented his report to Members in respect of the Highways Investment Scheme in RCT. Members were provided with a Power Point Presentation.

Following the presentation, Members had the opportunity to ask questions.

A Member queried what justification is needed for a member of the public to request investment or resurfacing on a particular road in their area. With regard to adopted highways, the Service Director advised that the best approach is for the Local Elected Member to write in to the Council and the Council will then investigate and assess it. The Highway Inspectors will also assess the highways on a regular basis. The Member added that there is a benefit to the Council in repairing the potholes as this will lead to less residents taking legal action for the cost of repairs to their vehicles. The Service Director acknowledged this but also added that it all depends on the monies available and that the amount of money needed to keep the highways as they are now is significant in these times of austerity measures.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED**:

- i. To Scrutinise the update on highways infrastructure within the County Borough with particular reference to the asset

management strategy and investment strategy; and,

- ii. To Scrutinise the expenditure required to maintain the highway infrastructure asset.

50 Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Fund Annual Report

The Service Director, Prosperity & Development presented his report to Members and provided an update in respect of the delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Fund.

Members then had the opportunity to ask questions. The Vice Chair queried if we were likely to still get funding after 2025. The Service Director advised that this is a replacement programme for EU funds and so the Council is confident that there will be some funding after 2025, however there is still a lot of uncertainty around this and the Council is working closely with the WLGA to raise these questions with UK Government.

Following discussions, Members **RESOLVED**:

- i. To consider the contents of the report; and,
- ii. To consider whether they wish to examine in greater depth any further matters arising from the report.

51 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to report.

52 CHAIRS REVIEW & CLOSE

The Vice Chair thanked Officers for providing such detailed reports and reminded Members that the next meeting will be held on the 4th March 2024.

This meeting closed at 6.34 pm

Vice Chair. Councillor G Warren