



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY PANEL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,
ON THURSDAY, 14TH JULY 2014 AT 5.00 PM**

PRESENT:

Councillor K. James - Chairman
Councillor D. Havard - Vice Chairman

Councillors:

M. Adams, Mrs A. Blackman, Mrs P. Cook, C. Elsbury, S. Kent, C.P. Mann, J.A. Pritchard

Together with:

P. Cooke (Team Leader, Sustainable Development & Living Environment), P. Rossiter (Energy and Water Officer), S. Martin (Energy Officer), S.M. Kauczok (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies had been received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Sustainable Development Advisory Panel meeting held on 10th April 2014 (minute nos. 1-6; page nos. 1-4) were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND LIVING ENVIRONMENT TEAM ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The Team Leader Sustainable Development and Living Environment (SD&LE), presented the report, which informed the Panel of progress made by the SD&LE Team against the agreed priorities for 2013/14.

The Annual Report is structured to reflect the four areas of work of the Team i.e. Sustainable Council; Education for Sustainable Development; Greener Caerphilly and Rural Development Programme, Sustainable Energy.

Paul Cooke highlighted some of the projects that the Team had been involved with during the past year. The Council continues to hold the Welsh Government backed All Wales Travel Plan Award at Gold Level, a scheme introduced to recognise best practice and commitment to travel planning. In line with its commitment to reducing CO2 emissions from vehicles, the Council has established a Salary Sacrifice Car Scheme as part of a government sponsored initiative to provide a leasing arrangement for low emission cars. Events during National Bike Week encouraged staff to leave their cars at home and cycle to work. CCBS's third annual Pedometer Challenge was held over 8 weeks this year, attracting more than 700 participants.

The Team has been working closely with ICT Services, Energy Management and the Carbon Reduction Group in reviewing sustainability issues in relation to the use of ICT equipment and ways in which ICT can support the sustainability agenda. To date 265 Multi Function Printers had been deployed across the Authority and a duplex rate of 58% has saved over 20 million pages since 2008.

The SD&LE Team had also contributed to the successful bids for Arbed projects at Fochriw and Hollybush and a bid had been submitted for projects at Phillipstown/Senghenydd. The Maes yr Onn Farm, off grid project was formally launched by the Minister for Natural Resources and Food in June 2013. The project won the main award at the Royal Town Planning Institute Awards.

The SD&LE Team has close links with Planning and provides support and advice to local people making planning applications to enable them to make their development more sustainable. For example, the Authority received a planning application for a smallholding at Nant-y-Cwm Farm under the One Planet Development legislation. The Team worked closely with Planning Officers to input into the evaluation of the application and interpretation of policy. After a detailed process the Farm became the first One Planet Development in Wales to receive permanent planning permission. As part of the process the applicants produced a detailed management plan and ecological footprint analysis, which demonstrated their commitment to sustainable living, including how they will provide for at least 65% of their basic household needs from land based activity within 5 years.

Members were advised that the SD&LE Team is also heavily involved in the LDP process. It contributes to the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the plan. The Team Leader is also a member of the LDP Focus Group.

Each service area within the Authority is required to produce a Service Improvement Plan setting out what they hope to achieve and how they will deliver their services. Since 2004/05 each service has been required to complete the SD Integration Tool as part of the SIP process. For 2013/14 the SD Integration Tool has been replaced with a new SD Statement for services to complete. Each year the SD&LE Team supports services to complete the SIP and comments on how it addresses the key sustainability issues relating to that service.

The Team has also contributed to successful bids for Arbed projects at Fochriw and Hollybush and has started the process of producing a Local Climate Impact Profile (LCLIP) for the County Borough. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has been a priority within the Authority since October 2004 when a dedicated ESD Officer was appointed to drive forward the agenda in the County Borough. As at 31st March 2014 all 91 schools had achieved an Eco School award, 11 schools in the County Borough having achieved the prestigious Eco School Platinum Award.

Solar pv panels have been installed on 9 schools in the Heads of the Valley area through the

Solar Schools Project, Phase 1. In partnership with UWHA an additional £71,000 has been secured to install solar pv panels on an additional 7 schools and the Aberbargoed Educational Centre.

The SD&LE Team continues to support the Young Enterprise Education Charity and co-ordinates the work of the Greener Caerphilly Outcome Group to ensure the benefits of working in partnership on environmental issues is maximised. The Caerphilly Environmental Quality Group, a sub group of the Greener Caerphilly Group, was successful in securing an allocation of £20,000 from the Authority's Community Schemes Fund for the Group to undertake priority projects during 2013/14. The funding supported the following projects viz. Pride in your Pitches; Healthy Rivers/River Schools and Go Wild! Pollinators.

In 2011 two Sustainable Energy Officers joined the Team. They are funded through the RDP programme to deliver the sustainable energy element of the programme. The main aim is to engage with farm households and rural businesses to reduce energy use, promote the uptake of renewable energy and help them to adapt to climate change.

Members of the Panel congratulated officers on their achievements and during the course of the ensuing discussion, asked whether it would be possible for the owners of Nant y Cwm Farm to be invited to a meeting of the Panel to discuss the project in more detail. Paul Cooke agreed to pursue this suggestion.

In terms of sustainable travel and the events that had taken place to encourage staff to leave their cars at home and cycle to work during National Bike Week, a Member queried whether monitoring was undertaken of the number of staff who cycle to work. Officers responded that this was not possible due to limited resources.

A Member asked whether officers from other departments could be invited to address the Panel to brief Members on the measures they are implementing in terms of sustainable development. It was suggested that a good example would be for officers from ICT Services to be invited to give an update on the savings achieved by the implementation of multi functional printers throughout the Authority.

With regard to the installation of pv panels on schools in the Heads of the Valleys area through the Solar Schools Project, a Member queried whether management committees of the various community centres throughout the county borough could be offered advice on installing pv panels. Paul Rossiter advised that he would be the point of contact in this respect.

The Panel noted the achievements against the priorities set for 2013/14.

5. LOCAL AUTHORITY ENERGY FINANCING SCHEME (LAEF)

Paul Rossiter, Energy and Water Conservation Officer, gave a presentation on the Local Authority Energy Efficiency Fund, which was established in 2004. It is an invest to save scheme designed specifically for energy conservation projects. The scheme is known nationally as SALIX, which is the name of the finance company that provides organisations with capital on behalf of central government. Salix has provided £200k and Caerphilly £419k.

A total of £1.469m has been invested to date and this has resulted in annual cost savings on electricity and gas bills of £371k. Payments to the carbon reduction scheme (carbon tax) have also been reduced by approximately £40k. The Authority's carbon emissions have been reduced by some 2,484 tonnes. The Salix national performance league tables for 2013/14 confirm that Caerphilly has outperformed all other participating Welsh authorities and has compared very well against the majority of the 132 UK wide participating organisations.

Details were received of projects undertaken in 2013/14 together with projects in the pipeline

for 2014/15. The Panel were advised that the plan to switch to LED lights at Risca swimming pool would cost £15,980 to install but would yield annual savings of £5,466 and 19.6 tonnes CO2.

The Chair thanked Mr Rossiter for his informative presentation and discussion ensued on the issues raised. The Panel noted the progress made to date and endorsed the continual investment in carbon reduction technologies.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLAN REPORT

Paul Cooke presented the report, which informed Members of the ongoing work on Climate Change Adaptation. The Climate Change Act 2008 gave Welsh Ministers the power to issue guidance on climate change impacts and adaptation. It also gave them power to issue a direction requesting bodies with public functions to prepare an adaptation report.

In association with the Caerphilly Living Environment Partnership, a high-level Climate Change Strategy was produced for the borough in 2009. The Strategy identified actions on mitigation (reducing the causes of climate change), adaptation (adapting to the changes) and opportunities. Mitigation is being taken forward by the carbon reduction and management work across the Authority.

The guidance identifies that undertaking a Local Climate Impact Profile (LCLIP) is a useful step in developing a Climate Change Adaptation approach. The main aim of the LCLIP is to ascertain if weather events over the study period have had a serious impact on Council activities. The first phase of the LCLIP process consisted of researching media sources in order to identify occurrences of extreme weather events between 2003 and 2013, which impacted on life in Caerphilly. The study identified 89 events of extreme weather.

A series of meetings has commenced to interview representatives from various service areas to verify the data obtained from media sources. These interviews are also being used to identify specific impacts of the extreme weather events on the service, how the service is responding and to begin the process of identifying the most significant events and impacts in order to prioritise and focus future actions. The interviews and follow up work is being compiled into individual reports for each service area, which will identify the main impacts and implications of extreme weather events for that service. These reports will then contribute to an overall report, which will provide a picture across the whole Authority.

Following discussion on the issues raised within the report, the Panel noted the progress being made on Climate Change Adaptation within the Authority.

The meeting closed at 6.15 pm.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any amendments being recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 6th November 2014.

CHAIR