



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY PANEL - 13TH JUNE 2012

**SUBJECT: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & LIVING ENVIRONMENT TEAM
ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12**

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To make Members of the Sustainable Development Advisory Panel aware of the progress achieved by the Sustainable Development & Living Environment Team against the agreed priorities for 2011/12.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Sustainable Development & Living Environment (SD & LE) Team continues to raise awareness of the key sustainable development issues, which affect the Authority, and to implement projects designed to improve the sustainability of the Authority. This report summarises some of the main achievements, the full text of the Annual Report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The SD & LE Team secured a total of £161,641 funding for projects in 2010/11.
- 2.3 The Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) work continues to go from strength to strength, demonstrating the benefit of employing a dedicated ESD Officer.
- 2.4 Two new officers joined the Team in 2011/12 to provide sustainable energy advice to farms and rural businesses, funded through the Rural Development Plan.
- 2.5 Other notable achievements in 2011/12 include:
- In July the Authority signed the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Charter, confirming our commitment to making sustainable development our central organising principle, and to promote and deliver wellbeing through our decisions and operations.
 - Greenhill Primary School, the county borough's newest school, achieved an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating score of A+, which no other school in the UK has been able to achieve to date.
 - Over 58% of our schools have now achieved a Green Flag (the highest award) under the Eco Schools programme. One school has achieved the coveted Eco Schools Platinum Award.
 - 241 Multi function printers (MFPs) have been deployed across the Authority to consolidate local printers, scanners and fax machines onto single devices these have replaced some 1,300 individual devices and saved 4.3m sheets of paper in 2011/12.
 - A Pedometer Challenge was run across the Authority to promote more active lifestyles. In total 727 employees took part, and collectively they walked 2.5 times around the world in the 5 week challenge.

- 3,489 residents of the county borough signed a pledge to combat climate change.
- The Council was awarded the Welsh Government/Sewta backed All Wales Travel Plan Award at Gold Level, a scheme introduced to recognise best practice in sustainable travel planning.
- The Council has recently established a new Salary Sacrifice Car Scheme. 123 low emission vehicles have been ordered via the scheme. On average the new vehicle has resulted in a 35% reduction in CO₂ emissions compared to the vehicle it replaced.
- In the first half-year 57% of waste collected was reused, recycled or composted continuing the Authority's excellent performance in this area.
- The Green Grin o meter, a children's version of the Caerphilly Sustainability Index was launched in both Welsh and English. It looks at the children's ecological footprint, happiness and health.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1 The work of the SD & LE Team supports the following strategies:

- Sustainable Development Strategy, 2008
- Caerphilly Community Strategy
- Education for Sustainable Development & Global Citizenship Strategy, 2009
- CCBC Corporate Improvement Plan 2009 – 2012
- Rural Development Plan
- Carbon Reduction Strategy
- Waste Management Strategy
- Corporate Travel Plan.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 The SD & LE Team Annual Report highlights the work of Team, including the work in partnership with the Sustainable Development Core Group, the Sustainable Development Advisory Panel (SDAP), and the Living Environment Partnership. It should be noted that this report does not seek to identify all sustainable projects throughout the Authority, but identifies areas where the SD & LE Team, Core Group or SDAP have been involved. It is part of the role of these 3 groups to provide support, and to promote a culture where sustainable projects can develop with or without their direct involvement.

4.2 The Annual Report is structured to reflect the 4 areas of work of the Team:

- Sustainable Council
- Education for Sustainable Development
- The Living Environment
- Rural Development Programme, Sustainable Energy

Sustainable Council

4.3 Sustainable Development Charter. In July 2011 Caerphilly County Borough Council signed the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Charter. The aim of the Charter is to contribute to making Wales a sustainable nation by encouraging organisations to work with the Welsh Government to deliver sustainable development objectives.

4.4 Peter Davies, Climate Change Commissioner for Wales and Sustainable Futures Commissioner for Wales attended the June meeting of SDAP. He addressed the Panel on SD issues in Wales. As part of his visit he went on a short projects tour. Following his visit Peter commented:

"..... we have a lot of rhetoric in Wales around sustainable development ... but what I've seen today is the practical implementation and that's what is so encouraging. Whenever I've been asked which local authorities are doing a good job on sustainability, Caerphilly is always one of the ones I mention."

- 4.5 In December 2011 we welcomed delegates from the National Planning Division of Japan. The visitors were keen to find out more about Caerphilly's sustainability programme, having been impressed with what they read about the Council's activities online.
- 4.6 The Green Team at Pontllanfraith House has continued to demonstrate the benefits of the Green Team approach, particularly in communicating and engaging with staff on sustainability issues. The model has provided a useful mechanism to deliver the objectives of the Carbon Management Plan, Waste management Plan and Travel Plan, and has provided a link for officers whose responsibility it is to implement these plans.
- 4.7 The SD & LE Team have been working with Sewta over the past few years to incorporate various sustainable transport initiatives into the Authority. As a result of this work the Council was awarded the Welsh Government backed All Wales Travel Plan Award at Gold Level, a scheme introduced to recognise best practice and commitment to travel planning.
- 4.8 12 events promoting sustainable travel, and highlighting the support and initiatives available to staff to enable them to travel more sustainably were run in 2011/12. Cycle to work salary sacrifice road shows were held at the main council offices and at a selection of leisure centres and schools to promote the scheme to staff.
- 4.9 During National Bike Week (June 16th to 24th 2011) staff were encouraged to leave their cars at home and cycle to work. A variety of events were held during the week including cycle training, electric bike training, sustainable travel events at Penallta House and Pontllanfraith House and a lunchtime mountain bike ride. Forty-five staff who cycled to work during the week were rewarded with a free bike breakfast.
- 4.10 A Commuter Challenge was also held during the week, a race between pushbike, electric bike and car to find out the quickest method to travel between Pontllanfraith House and Penallta House, a distance of 3.8 miles. The first past the post were the pushbikes completing the journey in 14 and 15 minutes, they were closely followed by the electric bike with a time of 16 minutes, with the car pulling up last taking nearly 18 minutes to complete the journey.
- 4.11 A Pedometer Challenge was held from January 30th to March 2nd 2012, consisting of a baseline week and a four-week challenge, catering for all CCBC employees. The challenge was a huge success attracting 81 teams and 54 individuals. Teams consisted of between 2 and 40 people, with a total of 727 people participating in the challenge, 8% of the workforce.
- 4.12 In line with our commitment to reducing CO₂ output from vehicles used on business mileage and in commuting to work, the Council has recently established a new Salary Sacrifice Car Scheme as part of a government-sponsored initiative to provide a leasing arrangement for low emission cars. In 2011/12, 123 vehicles were ordered via the scheme. On average the new vehicle has resulted in a 35% reduction in CO₂ emissions compared to the vehicle it replaced.
- 4.13 Work undertaken with the Strategic & Development Plan Team highlighted the need for a short course for planning professional practitioners to provide them with practical training in order to ensure that development control decisions are consistent with national and international climate change obligations, including contributions to renewable energy targets and aspirations. Training was developed and delivered. It was attended by 30 officers from within the Planning Division, including Development Control, Strategic Planning and Urban Renewal Sections.

- 4.14 The SD & LE Team has been working closely with the ICT Services, Energy Management Team and Carbon Reduction Group in reviewing sustainability issues with regard to the use of ICT equipment, and looking at the ways in which ICT can support the sustainability agenda.

The deployment of multi function printers (MPF's) to consolidate local printers, scanners and fax machines onto single devices is nearing completion. 241 MPF's have been deployed to date, replacing over 1,300 individual devices. The MPF's resulted in 4,349,768 pages being saved in 2011/12.

- 4.15 The Authority's newest school Greenhill Primary School in Gelligaer has become the first 1st A+ rated school in the UK under the Energy Performance Certificate programme. It has achieved the highest ever BREEAM rating for a school in the UK and is likely to become the first ever BREEAM "outstanding" school in the UK. The school generates more electricity than it consumes, and boasts rain water harvesting, solar shading, low air leakage, natural ventilation, very high insulation levels, Micro CHP, Four 1.5kW wind turbines, and a 500 sqm photovoltaic array.
- 4.16 £404k was allocated for implementing photovoltaic (PV) schemes at: TY Penallta (20kW rated size) Trinity Fields school (25kW) Ysgol Ifor Bach: (35kW) and St James children's unit (35 kW). Potentially reducing our carbon footprint by 53 tonnes a year and saving in excess £31,000 a year. A scoping study to assess the opportunities for hydropower across the county borough is currently underway. A hydroelectric power scheme is being considered for Cwm Carn visitor centre and a scheme near the Council offices at Pontllanfraith.

Education for Sustainable Development

- 4.17 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. Embedding an understanding of sustainable development within schools and young people is seen as a vital element of achieving a sustainable county borough.
- 4.18 By 31st March 2012, 90 of the 91 schools had achieved an Eco School award. Out of the 90 schools with an award, these are broken down into 14 Bronze awards, 23 silver awards and 53 Green Flag awards (including 23 second green flag awards and 11 third green flag awards). 58% of our schools now hold the Eco School Green Flag award.
- 4.19 St Gwladys Bargoed School achieved the Eco Schools Platinum award in March 2012, the first school in the Caerphilly county borough to achieve the coveted award, this is a huge achievement, with only 29 schools in Wales achieving the award.
- 4.20 Governor training sessions have been run once a term for governors within the Caerphilly county borough to support the actions highlighted in the International ESDGC Governor Charter. Lunchtime and evening training sessions have focussed on energy efficiency, the eco schools programme, sustainable development and the Fairtrade Schools Scheme. 24 governors received training on ESDGC during 2011/12.
- 4.21 An Eco Early Years Award Scheme is being developed to support early years settings working on environmental and sustainable projects as part of the settings development plan. The emphasis is on a commitment to environmental awareness and sustainable development within the setting and the wider community. The award scheme documents are currently being finalised, the aim is to launch the award in the spring term 2013 and trial the scheme with a variety of early years settings and childcare providers over a 12-month period.
- 4.22 We have developed the Green Grins Index Welsh version, to encourage children to calculate how sustainable they are. The index, aimed at children aged 8 to 12, will calculate their ecological footprint, health and happiness and provide tips on how to be more sustainable. The index allows children to monitor their sustainability, which supports the schools Eco School work programme.

- 4.23 Solar photovoltaic panels have been installed on nine schools in the Heads of the Valley area through the Solar Schools Project – Phase 1, supporting the energy efficiency topic of the eco school programme, as well as supporting the authority's commitment to reducing carbon emissions.
- 4.24 A Caerphilly Solar Schools Education Resource has been developed to support schools incorporating renewable energy and energy efficiency into the curriculum. The pack caters for primary and secondary schools, containing classroom and after school activities, lesson plans for each key stage, resources to support the activities and a list of useful websites and contacts throughout Wales.

The Living Environment

- 4.25 The Sustainable Development & Living Environment Team co-ordinates the Living Environment Partnership (LEP), which is one of the 4 thematic partnerships of Caerphilly's Community Strategy.
- 4.26 The Caerphilly Environmental Quality Group, a sub-group of the Living Environment Partnership, was successful in securing an allocation of £25,000 funding from the Authority's Community Assets Fund for the Group to undertake innovative priority projects during 2011/12. The CEQ Group operates a small grants scheme, which requires at least a £1 for £1 match funding to encourage maximum partner input. The £25,000 Community Assets money resulted in partnership projects worth £62,166. The CEQ Group supported the following projects:
- The Enviro Pride campaign was a partnership effort to tackle poor environmental quality and environmental crime in the borough. The project commenced in early September 2011 with a fortnight's concerted activity in Caerphilly town, which coincided with the borough's two flagship events - the Proms in the Park on the 10th September and the Tour of Britain Cycle Race on the 14th September.
 - The Non-Communities First Environmental Officer, who is based with Groundwork Caerphilly, worked with community partnerships in areas not covered by the Communities First programme. The Officer identified environmental projects with communities, and working with other Community Regeneration officers, assists those communities in improving their area by undertaking a diverse range of projects.
 - The Native Tree Bank project distributed 23,500 native trees to individuals, community groups, schools, and partner organisations.
- 4.27 **Events Programme 2011/12**
Many of our Living Environment Partners were engaged in an entire calendar of events and were particularly busy during the late Spring - early Summer period. The main events were:
- The Big Cheese
 - Bedwellty Agricultural Show
 - Mentro Allan Get Active event
 - Big Green Festival
 - Go Wild! Biodiversity Matters
- 4.28 The Come Outside! Team completed the second year of a three-year pilot project. The Team comprises partners in the CCBC Countryside and Landscape Service, the Community Regeneration / Communities First Teams and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW). The Come Outside! methodology involves engaging countryside and community development workers in promoting healthy lifestyles through the use of local, accessible green spaces. In the Aberbargoed area, 3 major green spaces are promoted - Aberbargoed Grasslands Special Area of Conservation, Bargoed Park and Parc Coetir Bargoed. During 2011-12, 141 community members volunteered for environmental improvements, 1,334 children attended environmental activities and 20 wildlife habitats were enhanced or created.

- 4.29 The SD & LE Team secured an allocation of £11,500 from the Community Assets budget for works to support the Allotments Strategy, which aims to bring disused and redundant plots in particular back into food production. This funding was used to undertake work at:
- Tunnel Row, Newbridge. The creation of a new allotment has provided 14 new full-size plots, all of which have been allocated. The allotment has now been handed over to the Islwyn Allotment Federation who have continued to invest further in the site's facilities.
 - Gwerthonor, Gilfach. Clearance work at Gwerthonor in Gilfach has allowed a further 5 plots to be made available.
 - Wyndham Street, Machen. Works at Wyndham Street in Machen has released land for approximately 6 plots.

During 2011-12, improvement works have also been undertaken at: 7 other allotment sites creating in total around 40 new plots

- 4.30 The Climate Change Woodlands concept was developed as a public engagement tool. It links with the Climate Change Commitment, and enables signatories - whether individuals, families, organisations, businesses or schools - to make a pledge to do their bit to tackle climate change and plant a tree as a long-lasting and publicly-visible sign of that commitment. During 2011-12, four Climate Change Woodlands were planted:
- The Sir Harold Finch Memorial Park Climate Change Woodland.
 - Darran Valley Climate Change Woodland Restoration Project.
 - Fochriw and Deri Schools' Climate Change Woodland.
 - Plas Mawr Community Centre.

Rural Development Plan

- 4.31 In 2011 two RDP Sustainable Energy Officers were appointed under axis 4 of the plan, which runs until the end of December 2013. The main aim of their project is to engage with farm households and rural businesses to reduce energy use and promote the uptake of renewable energy. Through promoting sustainable energy solutions they aim to increase the profitability of farms and rural businesses and to reduce their impact on the environment.
- 4.32 The officers provide 3 levels of support. Level 1 covers information and advice, and includes:
- Telephone and email advice on energy efficiency and renewable energy
 - Information on grants/loans, signposting to external organisations
 - Desktop solar power assessments
 - Factsheets

The factsheets cover the different renewable energy technologies, including biomass, heat pumps, micro hydro, solar photovoltaic, solar thermal and wind. The factsheets are aimed specifically at rural businesses.

- 4.33 Level 2 includes surveys and support. As part of the process of promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy to businesses, the RDP Sustainable Energy Team are able to offer free energy surveys to businesses whose bills are under £30,000 per year. The energy survey includes a site visit, during which a questionnaire is completed. Following this a report is generated that provides advice and recommendations on how the owner can improve the energy efficiency of the site, look at suitable renewable energy technologies (if any) and provide approximate costs and paybacks.
- 4.34 Level 3 support includes mentoring and exemplar projects. The first Exemplar is the development of a new farmhouse in a completely off grid setting, near Manmoel. The design is inspired by the traditional Welsh longhouse and compliments the upland setting of the rural area. Maes Yr Onn Farm lacks mains connection of electricity, gas, water or sewage

services. This provides some difficult challenges in integrating and balancing energy production and use within the property, but also some opportunities to promote sustainable solutions to energy/resource use and energy generation issues.

The second Exemplar aims to develop micro hydro schemes within the county borough. Working in partnership with Caron Trust Wales, hydro specialists, Locogen were appointed to complete a hydro viability study and overview of the opportunities for hydroelectric generation from high head and low head systems within the county borough. The aim of phase 1 of this study was to carry out a high level screening study of the area to assess the viability for low and high head hydro developments. The consultant carried out a desk based high-level assessment of all appropriate rivers and streams in the Caerphilly Borough area for hydro energy development potential. Following this screening study, 5 priority sites were shortlisted for preliminary feasibility studies (initial assessments) to assess the potential in more detail.

Monitoring and Measuring Progress

4.35 The SD & LE Team reports to a number of groups and against the indicators in several strategies within the Authority. The table below highlights progress against selected indicators:

Indicator	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Actual	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Actual
The number of organisations that have signed the climate change commitment	New PI	New PI	11	40	50
The number of individuals that have signed the climate change commitment	New PI	New PI	566	1,500	3,489
The number of staff on the 'Cycle to Work Scheme'	New PI	New PI	104	150	221
The percentage of schools with the highest (Green Flag) award under the Eco Schools programme	32%	39.5%	51.6%	56%	58%
The number of education for sustainable development training events with schools	New PI	New PI	128	100	102
Number of staff on our "Car share database"	New PI	New PI	293	350	321
Number of sustainable travel events held	New PI	New PI	10	12	13
Number of Climate Change Woodlands created	New PI	New PI	1	2	4
Farms and rural businesses advised on sustainable energy issues	New PI	New PI	New PI	20	28

Funding

4.36 The Sustainable Development & Living Environment Team secured an additional £161,641 to increase the 2011/12 budget from £31,800 to £193,441. This includes:

- £25,000 for Caerphilly Environmental Quality projects from the Community Assets budget
- £37,166 from Living Environment Partners to match fund CEQ projects
- £19,990 secured in partnership with United Welsh Housing Association to develop the Caerphilly Solar Schools Education Resource Pack
- £11,500 for Allotment projects from the Community Assets budget
- £3,500 for Climate Change Woodlands projects from the Community Assets budget

- £500 from the WLGA towards developing the Welsh Green Grin o Meter
- £1,180 from the Health Improvement Team towards the Pedometer Challenge
- £2,150 from Let's Walk Cymru e British Heart Foundation towards the Pedometer Challenge
- £9,995 from Sewta for a Pool Bike Scheme
- £14,000 from the Building Research Establishment contribution to RDP exemplars
- £2,500 from the WLGA consultancy for Climate Change Adaptation work
- £21,100 from the Countryside Council for Wales towards Community Strategy delivery
- £4,280 from Heads of the Valleys for renewable energy behaviour change Study
- £4,390 from Heads of the Valleys towards a study to identify opportunities for hydro schemes
- £4,390 from the Carbon Trust towards a study to identify opportunities for hydro schemes in the county borough

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no personnel implications.

7. CONSULTATIONS

7.1 See list below.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Panel notes the achievements against the priorities set for 2011/12.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 For the reasons set out in the report.

10. STATUTORY POWER

10.1 There are no statutory powers.

Author: Paul Cooke – Team Leader, Sustainable Development & Living Environment
 Consultees: Cllr Ken James - Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development
 Anthony O'Sullivan – Chief Executive
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 Paul Rossiter – Energy & Water Conservation Officer
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 Wayne Turner – Network Development Officer
 Tracy Evans - ESD Officer
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Appendices:
 Appendix 1: SD&LE Team Annual Report 2011/12