



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY PANEL – 14TH JULY 2014

**SUBJECT: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & LIVING ENVIRONMENT TEAM
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY 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 2013/14.

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 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) work continues to go from strength to strength, demonstrating the benefit of employing a dedicated ESD Officer.
- 2.3 The Team co-ordinated the transition of the Living Environment Partnership of the Community Strategy into the Greener Caerphilly Outcome Group of the Caerphilly Single Integrated Plan. The Team continues to co-ordinate the work of the Greener Caerphilly Outcome Group to ensure that we maximise the benefits of working in partnership on environmental issues.
- 2.4 The Team continues to deliver the Sustainable Energy element of the Rural Development Plan (RDP). This work includes raising awareness of sustainable energy and climate change issues with farms and rural businesses in the eligible rural wards.
- 2.5 Some specific achievements in 2013/14 include:
- 67% of our schools have achieved a Green Flag (the highest award) under the Eco Schools programme. Eleven schools have achieved the coveted Eco Schools Platinum Award.
 - An 8-week Pedometer Challenge was run across the Authority to encourage more active lifestyles. In total over 700 employees took part, with 437 formally submitting data via the website.
 - The council have continued to hold the Welsh Government/Sewta backed All Wales Travel Plan Award at Gold Level, a scheme introduced to recognise best practice in sustainable travel planning.

- Sustainable Energy advice was given to 37 farms and rural businesses in 2013/14.
- The Maes yr Onn Farm, off-grid project was formally launched by Alun Davies, the Minister for Natural Resources and Food, on the 6th June 2013. The project won the main award at the prestigious Royal Town Planning Institute Awards for 2013 Maes yr Onn Project Launch.
- The SD & LE Team secured a total of £157,770 funding for projects in 2013/14.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The work of the SD & LE Team supports the following strategies:
- Living Better, Using Less, the Sustainable Development Strategy (2008).
 - Caerphilly Delivers - Caerphilly Single Integrated Plan, 2013 - 2017
 - Education for Sustainable Development & Global Citizenship Strategy, 2009
 - One Wales, One Planet (2009), the Sustainable Development Strategy for Wales.
 - 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 Greener Caerphilly Outcome Group. 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
 - Greener Caerphilly
 - Rural Development Programme, Sustainable Energy

Sustainable Council

- 4.3 The Council has had a long commitment to sustainability and approved its first sustainable development policy in 1997. It has successively built on this foundation. In 2008 the Council published its Sustainable Development Strategy, *Living Better, Using Less*, which sets out the approach that the Authority is taking to sustainable development and our vision for a sustainable county borough. It sets out our strategy for tackling the issues and explains how we will manage and monitor the process and how we will report on progress.
- 4.4 Each year every Service within the Authority produces a Service Improvement Plan, which sets out what they will achieve and how they will deliver their services. The Service Improvement Plan process has a key role to play in ensuring that Services are considering economic, social and environmental issues related to their Service delivery. For 2013/14 reporting we have replaced the previous SD Integration Tool with a new SD Statement for Services to complete. The SD&LE Team supports Service to complete the Service Improvement Plan, and comments on how it addresses the key sustainability issues relating to that Service.

4.5 **All Wales Travel Plan Gold Award**

The SD & LE Team has worked with Sewta over the past few years to incorporate various sustainable transport initiatives into the Authority. As part of this work the council has continued 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.

4.6 **Sustainable Travel**

Nine events promoting sustainable travel, and highlighting the support and initiatives available to staff to enable them to travel more sustainably were run in 2013/14. Events during National Bike Week (June 17th to 21st 2013) encouraged staff 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, free bike breakfasts and lunches and a lunchtime mountain bike ride. Twenty-two staff that cycled to work during the week received a free bike breakfast or lunch.

In line with our 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. During 2013/14, 87 cars were delivered with a further 24 awaiting delivery. This gives a total of 306 cars delivered since the scheme began. They cover a wide range of manufacturers. The CO₂ emissions for the vehicles being replaced by the lease cars has resulted in an average saving of 35%. The best individual saving is 62%.

4.7 **Pedometer Challenge**

The SD Team worked with Let's Walk Cymru to help them develop the Let's Walk Cymru Pedometer Challenge Wales website, which is now free for any organisation or individual in Wales to use as part of their own pedometer challenge. The team provided advice and feedback on the website using evaluation data from previous CCBC Pedometer Challenge events. The Let's Walk Cymru Pedometer Challenge Wales website was then used as part of the 2014 CCBC Pedometer Challenge, which enabled us to provide additional feedback during the challenge period.

CCBC's 3rd Annual Pedometer Challenge was held over 8 weeks from February 3rd to March 30th 2014, catering for all CCBC employees. The challenge attracted 59 teams. Teams consisted of between 1 and 25 people, with a total of over 700 involved in the challenge, and 437 people formally submitting data through the website.

4.8 **Supporting Services**

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. To date 265 Multi Function Printers (MFP) had been deployed across the Authority. The duplex rate of 58% has saved just over 20 million pages since MFPs were introduced in 2008.

Procurement Services are striving to embed sustainability into their procurement processes by including their Sustainability Policy in all tender documentation and undertaking Sustainability Risk Assessments (SRA) at the initial stages of all relevant procurement processes.

The key focus of the team is now around Community Benefits and implementing this in key procurement projects wherever possible as well as identifying the incorporation of Targeted Recruitment and Training (TR&T) and Living Wage requirements into public sector contracts as being one of the ways it could help stimulate the local economy.

The SD & LE Team contributed to the successful bids for Arbed projects at Fochriw and Hollybush. The scheme at Fochriw is nearing completion. Improvements have been carried out to some 350 homes including external wall insulation, replacement of old boilers with higher efficiency boiler / heating systems and voltage optimisation.

The Hollybush project involves extending the existing gas mains network to the village and installing gas central heating to each property. Works commenced in 2013 to install the gas main to the village. The work will be ongoing throughout 2014 to install the full gas central heating systems for residents.

4.9 **Climate Change Adaptation**

The SD & LE Team has begun the process of producing a Local Climate Impact Profile (LCLIP) for Caerphilly county borough. A database of extreme weather events, between 2003 and 2013, has been collated by reviewing local media reports and interviewing key stakeholders.

The study identified 89 events of severe weather:

- 35 excessive rainfall/flooding events
- 23 frost/ice/snow events
- 14 storm/high wind events
- 11 Events of high temperatures/heatwave
- 4 Events of drought
- 2 Events of low temperatures/cold spells

Education for Sustainable Development

4.10 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.

4.11 **Eco Schools**

We achieved 100% participation in March 2009 with all schools in the Caerphilly county borough working towards the Eco Schools Programme. During 2013/14 schools have received support to help them through the process. At the 31st March 2014, all 91 schools had achieved an Eco School award, with 7 Bronze awards, 22 silver awards and 61 Green Flag awards (including 15 second green flag awards and 22 third green flag awards). 67% of our schools hold the Eco School green flag award.

Eleven schools in the county borough have also achieved the prestigious Eco School Platinum award.

An Eco School film has been developed to promote the Eco School achievements within the Caerphilly county borough. Filming was undertaken at five schools to ensure all eight eco school topics were promoted plus the seven elements of the eco school process. The storyboard was prepared to ensure each school knew what they had to cover as part of their filming session. The film is available for viewing via the councils website and the sustainable schools website.

4.12 **Eco Early Years Award Scheme**

An Eco Early Years Award Scheme has been 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 was launched in October 2013. To date one setting has already achieved the gold award, with a few settings waiting to be assessed.

4.13 **Solar Schools**

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. In partnership with United Welsh Housing Association an additional £71,000 has been secured to continue to install solar photovoltaic panels on an additional seven schools and the Aberbargoed Educational Centre.

4.14 **Young Enterprise**

The SD & LE Team have continued to support Young Enterprise. Young Enterprise is the United Kingdom's largest business and enterprise education charity. Every year they help 250,000 young people learn about business and the world of work in the classroom under the guidance of volunteers from 3,500 companies. In Caerphilly various departments of the Council are heavily involved in mentoring and supporting the work.

The SD & LE Team again sponsored the award for the environment category in 2013/14. This year it was won by "Accessory Express" a team from Cwmcarn High School. They purchased old Jewellery from charity shops and "upcycled" them/ cleaned them up and sold them on.

4.15 **Greener Caerphilly**

The Sustainable Development & Living Environment Team co-ordinated the Living Environment Partnership, which was one of the 4 thematic partnerships of Caerphilly's Community Strategy. A key focus of the work of the SD & LE Team in 2013/14 has been to ensure the integration of sustainable development and living environment issues into the Single Integrated Plan for the county borough. The Team co-ordinated the transition of the Living Environment Partnership of the Community Strategy into the Greener Caerphilly Outcome Group of the Caerphilly Single Integrated Plan. The Team continues to co-ordinate the work of the Greener Caerphilly Outcome Group to ensure that we maximise the benefits of working in partnership on environmental issues.

The Caerphilly Environmental Quality Group, a sub-group of the Greener Caerphilly Group was successful in securing an allocation of £20,000 funding from the Authority's Community Schemes Fund for the Group to undertake priority projects during 2013/14. The CEQ Group operates a small grants scheme, which requires at least a £1 for £1 match funding to encourage maximum partner input. The funding supported the following projects:

4.16 **Pride in your pitches**

Dog fouling and litter on the sports pitches in the county borough was identified as a major issue, affecting the health of those participating in sport, and preventing others from taking part in sport.

The "Pride in your Pitches" project engaged with local sports clubs to encourage and enable them to take greater ownership of the condition of their own pitches. This included sending information, guidance etc. to every club, to raise awareness of the health and environmental issues. Clubs were reminded of their responsibility to clean up their litter, drinks bottles etc. after their matches. A high profile launch event was held, hosted by a well know International rugby referee Nigel Owens.

4.17 **Healthy Rivers/River Schools**

A partnership project between Groundwork Caerphilly, South East Wales Rivers Trust (SEWRT), Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and CCBC established with the aim of removing the barriers to salmon migration up the River Sirhowy, and to engage local people with the project. Since the start of the Healthy Rivers programme, 5 barriers to fish migration have been removed or modified including Gibbs Weir, Penmaen Weir and Markham Colliery Tunnel. This has made a further 13km of the river Sirhowy accessible to migratory fish.

4.18 **Go Wild! Pollinators**

The Go Wild! Pollinators Project was organised through Caerphilly County Borough Council, Countryside and Landscape Service on behalf of the Caerphilly Biodiversity Partnership aimed to raise awareness of the importance of insect pollinators, in Caerphilly County Borough, and the benefits they provide to the natural environment, and to the local farming and horticultural economy.

The project aimed to encourage landowners and land managers to increase the availability of native wildflowers and plants for insect pollinators and supported a small number of practical projects that will encourage pollinators in 2014 and beyond. Practical projects included visits to the farms and allotment sites, provision of advice to farmers and allotment holders, supplying seed mixes and where necessary arranging for cultivation and seeding. Following initial contacts with farmers and allotments, a total of three allotment sites and three farms took part in the project.

4.19 The Climate Change Woodlands concept was developed as a public engagement tool. It links with the Climate Change Commitment scheme, 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 2013-14, five Climate Change Woodlands were planted:

- Graig Y Rhacca FC Woodland
- Glenview Terrace, Ynys Ddu
- Incredible Edible Orchard, Ynys Ddu
- Taraggan Educational Gardens
- Upper Sirhowy Valley

4.20 **Rural Development Plan (RDP)**

In 2011 two Sustainable Energy Officers joined the SD & LE Team. They are funded through the RDP programme to deliver the sustainable energy element of the programme. The main aim of their project 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.

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.

4.21 **Oldest Fridge Freezer competition**

Between September and October 2013 a project was run to make people aware of the energy consumption of old inefficient refrigeration appliances and to encourage individuals to upgrade to more efficient versions. The campaign was run as a competition to find the oldest fridge/freezer in Caerphilly County Borough. In total 121 residents entered the competition with the prize being a brand new energy efficient A++ fridge/freezer. The oldest appliance was a G.E.C. fridge (with a small freezer compartment) from the 1950's.

4.22 **Energy Surveys**

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. During 2013/14 a total of three energy surveys were completed and presented to businesses.

4.23 **Maes Yr Onn Off Grid Farmhouse**

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. A partnership between the RDP Sustainable Energy team, Building Research Establishment (BRE), SSE and Constructing Excellence in Wales (CEW) worked with the Davies family to provide a solution that balances resource efficiency with renewable technologies. Construction was completed in June 2013 and was launched on 6th June 2013 by Alan Davies AM, Minister for Natural Resources and Food. In November 2013 the project won the Royal Town Planning Institute Wales Planning Award.

4.24 **Farmhouse Energy Challenge**

The original Farmhouse Challenge took place in 2012 but due to interest from farmers another challenge was held in 2013, with a further 5 farms involved. Each participant received a monitoring diary in which to make a list of all major electrical appliances in the home, energy rating and approximate age. Householders recorded daily electricity meter readings and noted appliances used each day with an estimate of time used for 2 weeks.

They then received an in-house energy display and room-by-room information on how to save energy in the home. It motivated participants to make changes from the smallest change of turning off the lights when leaving a room to researching for energy efficient models of appliances to upgrade to.

4.25 **Climate Change Adaptation**

Linked to a wider Climate Change Adaptation Project being delivered by the SD&LE Team, the RDP energy team commissioned Netherwood Sustainable Futures to undertake a study to identify projected future climate changes, the implications for farms and rural businesses in Caerphilly and to identify actions that can be taken to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change in the county borough.

The main conclusion was that there are major knowledge gaps that need addressing to enable adaptation planning and that appropriate information provision for farmers and rural businesses in Caerphilly is required. It was therefore decided to develop a set of factsheets on crops, livestock, soils, water, biodiversity and trees to provide information summaries and to also complete a pilot project that will be site specific containing more information.

The team then developed a methodology for producing climate adaptation reports to enable farmers to begin to understand the likely impacts that climate change will have on their business and with the advice begin to put in place measures that will enable them to adapt to the changes and to make their business more resilient in the future. The methodology was trialled with 2 farms and the feedback has resulted in site specific projects being developed to make the farms more resilient to climate change.

Monitoring and Measuring Progress

4.26 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 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Target	2013/14 Actual
Number of Services supported	4	5	5	7	5	7	5
The number of staff on the 'Cycle to Work Scheme'	New PI	New PI	104	221	291	320	360
The percentage of schools with a Green Flag award under the Eco Schools programme	32%	39.5%	51.6%	58%	62%	65%	67%

The number of education for sustainable development training with schools	New PI	New PI	128	102	89	90	89
Number of staff on our "Car share database"	New PI	New PI	293	321	342	350	354
Number of sustainable travel events held	New PI	New PI	10	13	11	12	9
Number of Climate Change Woodlands created	New PI	New PI	1	3	3	3	5
Farms and rural businesses advised on sustainable energy issues	New PI	New PI	New PI	28	28	30	37

Funding

4.27 The Sustainable Development & Living Environment Team **secured an additional £157,770 to contribute to our work in 2013/14**. This includes:

- £71,000 from UWHA for Solar Schools phase II
- £20,000 for Caerphilly Environmental Quality projects from the Community Scheme budget
- £34,500 from Living Environment Partners to match fund CEQ projects
- £5,800 for Climate Change Woodlands projects from the Community Scheme budget
- £10,000 for Environmental Volunteers projects from the Community Scheme budget
- £2,180 from Lets Walk Cymru towards the Pedometer Challenge
- £3,750 from Sewta for Cycle Training
- £400 from Fairtrade Wales towards Fairtrade school training
- £10,140 from Natural Resources Wales towards Community Strategy delivery

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's Equality process does not need to be applied.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 There are no consultation responses, which have not been incorporated into this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That the Panel notes the achievements against the priorities set for 2013/14.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 For the reasons set out in the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 There are no statutory powers.

Author:P Paul Cooke – Team Leader, Sustainable Development & Living Environment
Consultees: Cllr Ken James - Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable
Development
Cllr Derek Havard - Vice Chair, Sustainable Development Advisory Panel
Sandra Aspinall – Acting Deputy Chief Executive
Pauline Elliott – Head of Regeneration & Planning
Paul Rossiter – Energy & Water Conservation Officer
Alison Palmer – Community Planning Co-ordinator
Christopher Davidge, – Procurement Officer
Wayne Turner – Network Development Officer.
Tracy Evans - ESD Officer:
Kelly Silcox – RDP Sustainable Energy Officer

Appendices:

Appendix 1: SD&LE Team Annual Report 2013/14