

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2006-2021)**

# **Climate Change Topic Paper**

April 2008

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## BACKGROUND

In January 2007 the Council issued for public consultation the Local Development Plan: Preferred Strategy. The Strategy was the first stage of the new statutory local development plan (LDP).

The next stage in the plan making process is the production of a deposit draft LDP. In order to ensure the soundness of the emerging LDP and transparency in the plan making process, the Council has produced a series of topic papers.

The topic papers address the main area of policy to be considered in the LDP. **It should be stressed that these papers are a starting point for policy development, through the sustainability appraisal process and as the Council's evidence base develops, emerging LDP policy will evolve and be refined.**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Climate change is an urgent and potentially catastrophic challenge of our time. Doing nothing is not an option. It is important to act now to prevent the worst. This means effecting a real change in the way we plan our communities. The planning system has a crucial role in preventing further damage through setting out ambitious but realistic targets for on-site renewable energy production and requiring development proposals to incorporate sustainable design and construction measures, which include energy consumption reduction measures.

The planning system must help in the process of balancing and integrating these targets in order to meet current needs whilst safeguarding those of the future.

The LDP will establish a robust and meaningful policy context for the protection of Rhondda Cynon Taf's climate. In doing so, the LDP will manage and seek to mitigate the effects of climate change.

In order to do this the topic paper will outline:

- **The policy context** for climate change, including a explanation of national, regional, and local policy;
- **Key issues in Rhondda Cynon Taf**, which relate specifically to climate change;
- **Preferred Strategy**, policy in respect of climate change, representations to the Strategy and proposed policy response, and
- **Draft LDP Policy**, which provides a policy context for climate change.

### 2. NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

*People, Places, Futures – The Wales Spatial Plan (Adopted 2004)*

The Wales Spatial Plan provides a framework for the future spatial development of Wales. Rhondda Cynon Taf along with its neighbouring authorities of Cardiff, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly and the Vale of Glamorgan have been identified as part of the South East – Capital Network Zone. The vision for the Capital Network is:

“An innovative skilled area offering a high quality of life - international yet distinctively Welsh. It will compete internationally by increasing its global viability through stronger links between the Valleys and the coasts and the UK and Europe, helping spread prosperity within the area and benefiting other parts of Wales”.

Whilst the Wales Spatial Plan may not provide a detailed framework for climate change in the South East Wales region, it does provide a number of clear propositions. These include the following:

- To reduce Wales’ contribution to climate change by, for example, increasing its share of renewable energy in those areas best suited to provide it and by increasing energy efficiency in industry, housing and transport, as well as by protecting existing carbon sinks.
- To work now to help the environment, economy and society adapt to climate change’s potential impacts, including flood risk.
- That the Welsh Assembly Government will review the action that it can take to mitigate Wales contribution to global warming and to help Wales adapt to climate change.
- That development should be avoided in areas vulnerable to future flooding in the light of estimates of the impact of climate change following the advice in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15 Development and Flood Risk.

*Turning Heads – A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020 (June 2006)*

Turning Heads – A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020, outlines the strategy for regenerating the northern Valley areas of South East Wales. The strategy area in Rhondda Cynon Taf area includes Treorchy, Treherbert, Ferndale, Mountain Ash and Aberdare.

The objectives of the programme reflect those of the Wales Spatial Plan in seeking to ensure:

- An attractive and well used natural, historic and built environment;
- A vibrant economic landscape offering new opportunities;
- A well educated, skilled and healthier population;
- An appealing and coherent tourism and leisure experience, and
- Public confidence in a shared bright future.

With regards to climate change, a core principal that underpins the work carried out by the Strategy for the Heads of the Valley is Sustainable Development. This core principal states that:

“A joined-up approach to economic, environmental and social improvement will take into account the potential future impacts of climate change, and embedding the principles contained within the Welsh Assembly Government’s ‘Creating Sustainable Places’”.

*Draft Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement (MIPPS) on Climate Change (December 2006)*

Welsh Assembly Government climate change policy is embodied in the Draft MIPPS on Climate Change; MIPPS on Renewable Energy (2005); MIPPS on Housing (2006); MIPPS on Good Design (2008). Unlike other amendments to Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (March 2002), the cross cutting nature of the climate change topic requires that the Draft MIPPS on climate change range over a number of sections in PPW. Furthermore, it also involves minor amendments to previously issued MIPPS on Housing and Renewable Energy.

Climate change policies listed in the MIPPS on Renewable Energy, Housing, and Good Design, which have not been amended by the Draft MIPPS on Climate Change, will be outlined under separate headings in this paper. Supplementary guidance in relation to climate change is contained in TANs 8, 15 and 18, which are also outlined under separate headings in this paper.

The Welsh Assembly Government's objectives for climate change are to:

- Contribute locally to global sustainability and address the causes and potential impacts of climate change by ensuring that development maximises the opportunity to reduce energy and water use;
- Ensure the causes and impacts of climate change are taken into account in the location of development allocations and design and siting of proposals;
- Minimise the risks posed by, or to, development on, or adjacent to, unstable or contaminated land and land

liable to flooding. This includes managing and seeking to mitigate the effects of climate change by building resilience into the design and location of development and the natural and built environment by anticipating increased temperatures, water constraints and flood risks;

- Minimise the use of non-renewable resources, and where it is judged necessary to use them, maximise efficiencies in their use, by requiring where appropriate, the use of recycled materials, renewable materials, or materials which have the lowest embodied energy. The use of renewable resources and of sustainably produced materials from local sources should be encouraged and recycling and reuse levels arising from demolition and construction maximised and waste minimised;
- Ensure every opportunity is taken to use energy efficient, low carbon supply measures to meet demand. Major development is expected to incorporate decentralised heating, combined heat and power (CHP) networks, preferably powered by renewable energy sources, to connect to existing CHP or communal/district heating networks.
- Ensure every opportunity is taken to maximise the provision of renewable energy generation from microgeneration equipment in new and existing development, including allowing for future inclusion as part of the design of buildings where it is not being incorporated;
- Ensure that vulnerability to severe weather events is minimised and infrastructure is adequate to cope with increasing risk of storm surges, drought and flooding; and

- Through the design process ensure that development contributes to tackling the causes of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In order to achieve this the Welsh Assembly Government will seek to ensure that:

- The planning of new development is linked to the availability of water and energy resources and environmentally sound ways of managing demand and environmental risks.
- Buildings are designed to minimise energy demand and be constructed in ways that are resource efficient. Also important is to ensure efficiency in water use and to manage the discharge and drainage of water and waste.
- The design of the space around buildings, including landscaping, should take account of the human need for protection from the sun and the elements and the ecological needs of flora and fauna in a changing climate, including ways in which habitat connectivity can be maintained.
- Development is well serviced by existing infrastructure;
- Development encourages opportunities for commercial and residential uses to derive environmental benefit from co-location.
- Local planning authorities include within development plans a policy requiring major developments to reduce their predicted CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by a minimum of 10% (from the current baseline required by building regulations) through improvements to the energy performance of buildings, efficient supply of heat,

cooling and power and/or on site renewable energy. The scale of development for the application of the policy and the percentage reduction selected will need to be determined locally, based on sound evidence and the need for planning policy to interact effectively with developing building control requirements.

Climate change presents not only risks to people, property, infrastructure and resources but also new opportunities. The planning system has a significant role to play in the delivery of new and more effective forms of energy provision and other adaptation measures. Failure to plan for uncertainty and accommodate future adaptation, or constrain or reduce effectiveness of future adaptations, will impact adversely on communities, through damage to property, infrastructure and the economy.

*Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2005:  
Renewable Energy (June 2005)*

The MIPPS for Renewable Energy offers amendments to sections 12.8 to 12.10 (Sustainable Energy, Development Plans and sustainable energy, Development control and sustainable energy) of PPW, using existing paragraph headings and numbers.

The Welsh Assembly Government's objectives for climate change are:

- To provide an appropriate mix of secure energy provision for Wales, whilst minimising the impact on the environment.

In order to achieve this the Welsh Assembly Government will seek to ensure that:

- Renewable energy production is strengthened through a greater focus on energy efficiency and conservation.

*Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2006: Housing (June 2006)*

The MIPPS for Housing revises Chapter 9 of PPW.

The Welsh Assembly Government's objectives for climate change are to provide:

- Homes that are in sustainable communities;

In order to achieve this the Welsh Assembly Government will seek to ensure that:

- New housing and residential environments are well designed and environmentally sound (especially energy efficient).

*Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2008: Planning for Good Design (January 2008)*

The MIPPS for Planning for Good Design provides a revised section 2.9 (Promoting sustainability through good design) of PPW.

The Welsh Assembly Government's objectives for climate change are to provide:

- Through the design process, development that contributes to tackling the causes of climate change (by reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and effective adaptation to climate change impacts.

In order to achieve this the Welsh Assembly Government will seek to ensure:

- An integrated and flexible approach to design, including such things as location, density, layout and built form, which be an appropriate way of contributing to climate responsive development.

*Planning Policy Wales (March 2002)*

Welsh Assembly Government climate change policy is embodied in the PPW guidance. Although a large proportion of the relevant climate change policies of PPW have been redrafted in the form of the draft MIPPS on Climate Change, some policies remain on sustainable development, which are related to climate change. The PPW Companion Guide (2006) relates the guidance to the LDP system, identifying clear statements of national policy that should only be repeated in where local circumstance require.

The Welsh Assembly Government's specific objective for the climate change and sustainable development agenda is to follow the UK Government's energy policy to ensure a secure, diverse and sustainable supply of energy at competitive prices consistent with wider economic policies, the promotion of energy efficiency and health and safety and the full and proper protection of the local and global environment. This includes increasing the UK contribution of electricity supplied

from renewable energy sources to 5% by the end of 2003, rising to 10% by 2010.

The Welsh Assembly Government's broad objectives for the climate change and sustainable development agenda are to:

- Locate developments so as to minimise the demand for travel, especially by private car;
- Encourage opportunities to reduce waste and all forms of pollution and promote good environmental management and best environmental practice;
- Promote a greener economy and social enterprises;
- Promote sustainable patterns of development, identifying previously developed land and buildings, and indicating locations for higher density development at hubs and interchanges and close to route corridors where accessibility on foot and by bicycle and public transport is good;
- Promote a broad balance between housing and employment opportunities to minimise the need for long distance commuting;
- Promote the generation and use of energy from renewable sources and energy efficiency, especially as a means of reducing the effects of climate change.

In order to achieve this the Welsh Assembly Government will seek to ensure that:

- Wherever possible travel intensive developments should be located at major public transport nodes or interchanges;
- Higher density development, including residential development should be encouraged, near public

transport nodes, or near corridors well served by public transport (or with the potential to be so served);

- Diversification in the local economy and development which respects the environment should be encouraged.

*Technical Advice Note (TAN) 8: Planning for Renewable Energy (July 2005)*

TAN 8 provides advice on the land use planning considerations of renewable energy. It also advises that Local Development Plans should promote high standards of energy efficiency, energy conservation and the use of renewable energy as a part of the national and international response to climate change, which should be reflected in the strategy of development plans.

*Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk (July 2004)*

TAN 15 provides advice on development and flood risk, and provides a framework within which risks arising from both river and coastal flooding, and from additional run-off from development in any location can be assessed.

TAN 15 suggests the incidence and extent of both river and coastal flooding is expected to increase with time as a consequence of climate change. Therefore, new development must be planned sensitively, with climate change in mind. TAN 15 directs planning authorities and developers to the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP), which comprises the latest information with regard to climate change.

*Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (March 2007)*

TAN 18 provides advice on how a sustainable transport system is a requirement for a modern, prosperous and inclusive society, and that road traffic growth is a cause of increased local air pollution and green house gas emissions which contribute to global warming and climate change.

It also outlines the methods by which the Welsh Assembly Government will meet its sustainable development policy objectives.

*South East Wales Regional Waste Group Consultation Draft Regional Waste Plan 1<sup>st</sup> Review (October 2007)*

The Consultation Draft of the South East Wales Regional Waste Plan (RWP) 1<sup>st</sup> Review is a non-statutory plan prepared through a voluntary joint arrangement of 11 Local Planning Authorities with the assistance of other key stakeholders.

It provides a land-use planning framework for the sustainable management of wastes and recovery of resources in South East Wales. Its aims are:

- A. To minimise adverse impacts on the environment and human health.
- B. To minimise adverse social and economic impacts and maximise social and economic opportunities.
- C. To meet the needs of communities and businesses.
- D. To accord with the legislative requirements, targets, principles and policies set by the European and national legislation and policy framework.

In order to meet these aims, objectives have been set for the RWP 1st Review. These have been guided by the European and National policy context and informed by the SEA / SA process. With regard to climate change, an environmental and health objective (Aim A) is to:

- Adapt to the effects of climate change

The RWP 1st Review identifies four options to deal with waste, all of which mitigate climate change. They are as follows:

- **Option 1:** (a Landfill-led strategy for residual waste)  
The strategy plans for a small number of facilities to help to recover energy from some of the residual waste remaining after 50% recycling and composting. This will help mitigate climate change.
- **Option 2:** (an EfW-led strategy for residual waste)  
The strategy plans for a larger number of facilities, compared to Option 1, to help to recover energy from the majority of the residual waste remaining after front end recycling and composting. This will help significantly mitigate climate change effects arising from activity in Wales.
- **Option 3:** (an MBT / BMT-led strategy for residual waste)  
The strategy plans for a large number of MBT / BMT facilities with associated thermal treatment facilities to help further recycle and recover energy from the majority the residual waste remaining after front end recycling and composting. This will help to considerably mitigate climate change effects arising from activity in Wales.

- **Option 4:** (an Autoclave-led strategy for residual waste).

The strategy plans for a large number of Autoclave facilities with associated thermal treatment facilities to help further recycle and recover energy from the majority of the residual waste remaining after front end recycling and composting. This will help mitigate climate change effects arising from activity in Wales.

#### *Renewable Energy Route Map for Wales (2008)*

The Renewable Energy Route Map for Wales sets out proposals for moving Wales towards self-sufficiency in renewable electricity in a generation, whilst at the same time driving forcefully towards much more energy efficiency and extensive heating requirements being supplied from renewable sources.

Stated within the Renewable Energy Route Map for Wales is the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to ensure that by 2011 all new buildings in Wales will be built to zero carbon standards. In addition, the Welsh Assembly Government wants to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions below 1990 levels by 2010 and a 60 per cent reduction by 2050. Furthermore, the Welsh Assembly Government has a commitment to achieve an annual 3% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2011 onwards.

#### *One Wales: A progressive agenda for the government of Wales (June 2007)*

The One Wales agenda outlines the programme for the government of Wales over a four-year term. One major

programme for government over the four-year term involves tackling climate change.

The Welsh Assembly Government's aims for tackling climate change include to:

- Establish a Climate Change Commission for Wales which will include members from all four political parties, businesses, local government and voluntary sector groups. The Commission will assist with the development of new policies and the creation of consensus on climate change. It will work in partnership with Wales' representative on the UK Sustainable Development Commission.
- Achieve annual carbon reduction-equivalent emissions reductions of 3% per year by 2011 in areas of devolved competence. Specific sectoral targets will be set out in relation to residential, public and transport areas. The Assembly Government will work with the heavy industry/power generation industries to reduce emissions in those sectors.
- Commit to targets on the carbon neutrality of public buildings;
- Provide support for indigenous woodlands, including a tree for all new babies and adopted children, helping to create a Welsh National Forest of native trees to act as a carbon sink;
- Draw up an Energy Strategy, which will be integrated with a planning framework, to include actions on energy efficiency, microgeneration, eco roofs, diversified renewable energy generation and biomass; and

- Improve targets for recycling with legislation and support for better and more coordinated waste management.

*Meeting the Energy Challenge: A White Paper on Energy (HM Government: Department of Trade and Industry) (May 2007)*

The White Paper sets out a framework for action to enable the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations to make real progress now toward tackling climate change and ensuring secure and affordable energy supplies.

The White Paper sets out the UK Government's international and domestic energy strategy to respond to these changing circumstances along with its policy goals.

The key elements of the strategy are to:

- **Establish an international framework to tackle climate change**  
This should include a shared vision for stabilising the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. We also want a strengthened EU Emissions Trading Scheme to deliver a market price for carbon and to be the basis for a global carbon market. This will enable carbon emissions to be reduced in the most cost-effective way.
- **Provide legally binding carbon targets for the whole UK economy, progressively reducing emissions**  
The draft Climate Change Bill creates a new legal framework for the UK achieving, through domestic and

international action, at least a 60% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050, and a 26-32% reduction by 2020, against a 1990 baseline. The UK Government will be required to set five-year carbon budgets, placing binding limits on aggregate carbon dioxide emissions. There is provision in the draft Bill for the targets to be amended in light of significant developments in climate science or in international law or policy.

- **Make further progress in achieving fully competitive and transparent international markets**  
This will enable companies to get fair access to the energy resources we need. Effective markets will ensure that the world's finite resources are used in the most efficient way and ensure that we make the transition to a low carbon economy at least cost. Further liberalisation of EU energy markets is an important part of this.
- **Encourage more energy saving through better information, incentives and regulation**  
By removing barriers to the take up of cost-effective energy efficiency measures, all of business, individuals, the public sector, and us can take steps to reduce emissions and our energy dependence. We are also working in the EU and G8 to promote energy efficiency internationally.
- **Provide more support for low carbon technologies**  
The UK Government needs to bring about a step change in global investment to bring forward low carbon technologies. The private sector on its own may not invest adequately in research, development, demonstration and deployment of these technologies. This White Paper describes how public / private sector

collaboration and increased international collaboration can address this problem.

- **Ensure the right conditions for investment**

The UK Government needs a clear and stable regulatory regime, including for valuing carbon, to reduce uncertainty for business and help to ensure sufficient, timely investment. The UK Government needs to improve our planning system and to provide better information and analysis of long-term energy market trends to inform energy purchasing and investment decisions.

The UK Government's policy goals for energy are:

- To put themselves on a path to cutting the UK's carbon dioxide emissions - the main contributor to global warming - by some 60% by about 2050, with real progress by 2020;
- To maintain the reliability of energy supplies;
- To promote competitive markets in the UK and beyond, helping to raise the rate of sustainable economic growth and to improve our productivity; and
- To ensure that every home is adequately and affordably heated.

#### *Environment Strategy for Wales (2006)*

The Environment Strategy for Wales outlines the Welsh Assembly Government's long-term strategy for the environment of Wales, setting out the strategic direction for the next 20 years.

The purpose of the Strategy is to provide the framework within which to achieve an environment which is clean, healthy, biologically diverse and valued by the people of Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government wants to see the Welsh environment thriving and contributing to the economic and social wellbeing and health of all of the people of Wales.

The Vision for the environment of Wales, as set out by the Strategy, includes to:

- Minimise greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

To achieve the Vision, the Strategy highlights the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to:

- The Kyoto target of a 12.5 per cent reduction in the emissions of greenhouse gases by 2008-2012.
- The UK Government goals of a 20 per cent reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions below 1990 levels by 2010 and a 60 per cent reduction by 2050, with real progress by 2020.
- A target of a 20 per cent cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 on a 2000 baseline of 46.114 mega tonnes of carbon dioxide.
- Focusing action on sectors where it can exert influence such as reducing transport demand and developing alternative fuels; public and social sector procurement, construction and estate management; promoting energy efficiency, renewable and low carbon energy generation; and land management practices that preserve soil carbon.

- Work with, and seek to influence, the UK Government and Europe, in order to secure emission reductions in the areas that they hold policy responsibility for. Areas include: building regulations, energy policy, fiscal measures, emissions trading and air transport.

The Strategy also outlines that a climate change adaptation action plan will be developed to set out the actions that will be taken. The action plan will seek to address:

- The impact of increased flood risk on key assets like schools, hospitals, transport infrastructure, housing stock, businesses and industry and on land management;
- The impact of increased storminess, with a greater risk of property damage and land instability, on key assets like schools, hospitals, transport infrastructure, housing stock, businesses and industry and on land management
- The public health impact of warmer summers, including fatalities due to very high temperatures and increased air pollution;
- Possible increases in food poisoning, and possible risk of new diseases;
- The impact of thermal discomfort due to warmer summers in key assets like schools, hospitals, transport infrastructure, housing stock, businesses and industry;
- The impact of increased pressure on water resources at certain times of the year;
- The impact on biodiversity;
- The impact on agricultural and forestry practice;

- Opportunities, for example in developing and producing technology and services to deal with the impacts of climate change.

*Responding to Our Climate Change: Consultation on a climate change adaptation action plan for Wales (February 2007)*

The Adaptation Action Plan consultation is a follow-up to the Environment Strategy for Wales document. It identifies the action needed in response to the potential impact of climate change. It also highlights the principles which should be implemented to ensure the successful adaptation to any potential impacts.

They are as follows:

- A commitment to promote equality and address differential climate change impacts;
- The need for partnership working between different organisations and across geographic boundaries;
- A commitment to engaging the public in responding to climate change impacts;
- Clear communication across organisations and with the public;
- Holistic and integrated thinking is needed for effective adaptation;
- Short, medium and long term actions;
- The public sector will lead by example;
- Action taken to adapt to the impacts of climate change must not contribute to further emissions, worsening the climate impacts of the future

- Action to adapt to climate change must be taken alongside action to further reduce emissions.
- Actions to address the impacts of climate change must be considered in a spatial context, taking into account the needs of both urban and rural communities;
- Action is needed at all levels, and key mechanisms for this consideration will include the Spatial Plan and Community Strategies.

*South East Wales - The Capital Network Area Interim Statement for the South East Wales Spatial Plan area (2007)*

The Area Interim Statements (AIS) provide progress updates for the spatial plan area based on what has been successfully agreed by partners to date. They also form the basis of the formal consultation on the Wales Spatial Plan Update which takes place every year.

In relation to climate change, the AIS for South East Wales upholds that new development should take account of the impact of climate change and ways to address the challenges it presents. This includes the use of opportunities to be served by local energy facilities, and local planning authorities should protect soil carbon whenever possible, support wider action on climate change, and mitigate flood risk.

*Wales Spatial Plan Update: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – Environmental Report (January 2008)*

The SEA of the Wales Spatial Plan Update sought to improve the environmental performance of the Plan by assessing whether the Spatial Plan Update was likely to result in any significant environmental effects (positive or negative). The

Environmental Report documents the findings of the assessment on the Wales Spatial Plan Update.

The first stage of the SEA focused on the identification of the sustainability issues, both at a National and an Area level. The issues identified include climatic factors.

Key issues linked to climatic factors, as listed by the Environmental Report, include:

- Greenhouse gas emissions (which are relatively high in UK terms);
- Wales' high potential for renewable energy generation; and
- That new and existing developments need to adapt to the effects of climate change.

The list of broad SEA objectives that relate to the key issue of climatic factors, as listed by the Environmental Report, include:

- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions in both existing and new development and ensure that adequate measures are in place to adapt to climate change

The national framework for tackling the issue of climatic factors, as listed by the Environmental Report, identifies the following:

- That through the development of low carbon regions and the alignment of key settlements with public transport corridors; the encouragement of both

greenhouse gas reduction and responses to adapt to climate change; and a collaborative working between The Welsh Assembly Government, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency, Cadw and the Forestry Commission, should help ensure that land-based issues relating to climate change are managed effectively along with the promotion of a reduced carbon footprint for transport.

*Climate Change: The UK Programme 2006 (HM Government) (March 2006)*

The UK Climate Change Programme 2006 contains commitments to help achieve national goals of reducing carbon dioxide by 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2010 and, in the long-term, reduce emissions by 60 per cent by 2050.

The UK Climate Change Programme 2006 sets out policies and priorities for the Government and Devolved Administrations to ensure that the UK continues to lead by example on climate change and starts to make the transition to a lower carbon economy.

The policies and priorities include a strong focus on:

- A stabilisation goal to frame future international action;
- Progress through the UN Framework on Climate Change and the G8 Dialogue;
- A greater role for the European Union;
- Supporting microgeneration technologies, with the aim of encouraging manufacture at higher scale leading to lower costs;

- Supporting electricity from renewables and addressing the barriers to take-up;
- The climate change levy and associated climate change agreements to encourage businesses to improve the efficiency with which they use energy;
- Resource efficient farm management in order to reduce agriculture's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions; and
- The scope and feasibility of an emissions trading scheme for the agriculture and forestry sector.

*The Planning Response to Climate Change (Department for Communities and Local Government) (2004)*

The Planning Response to Climate Change provides an overview of the policy context and state of knowledge on the planning response to climate change.

The Planning Response to Climate Change identifies the UK Government and Devolved Administrations' *Climate Change: The UK Programme* as a wide-ranging programme designed to tackle climate change. It includes a domestic target to reduce the UK's carbon dioxide emissions, through domestic and international action, to 26 – 32 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020 and to at least 60 per cent by 2050.

### **3. LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT**

*A Better Life – Our Community Plan 2004 – 2014 (2004)*

A Better Life - Our Community Plan sets out a framework for creating a brighter future for everyone who lives and works in Rhondda Cynon Taff. The plan was developed through the

Better Life Consortium, during 2003/2004. The Community Plan identifies 5 key themes under which are a series of local level aims. The key themes are:

- Safer Communities
- Our Living Space
- Our Health and Well Being
- Boosting Our Local Economy
- Learning for Growth

The key themes identified in the Community Plan have been developed into strategies for improving the quality of life in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Climate change is considered as part of the Environmental Improvement Strategy (Our Living Space).

The Environmental Improvement Strategy (2005) sets the following themes:

- Biodiversity and Rivers
- Waste
- A Cleaner, Safer Environment
- Local Environment
- The Built Environment
- Transport
- Energy, Resource Use and Climate Change

Of particular relevance to the topic area are two of the five priorities set out under the Energy, Resource Use and Climate Change theme.

The priorities seek to promote:

- Greater co-ordination of activities locally to reduce energy consumption, increase energy efficiency and investigate new sources of renewable energy; and
- Increase research aimed at improving the understanding of the energy big picture locally in terms of how much energy is used locally and by whom alongside a commitment by all partners on the Environmental Improvement Partnership to change and review their energy usage and address climate change as an issue of local importance.

*Draft Action for Nature 2008: The Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf (January 2008)*

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for Rhondda Cynon Taf 'Action for Nature' was first produced in 2000 by the LBAP Steering Group and contained hundreds of individual species and habitat actions, wrapped up in four main generic action themes.

The Steering Group has subsequently reviewed 'Action for Nature' and produced an updated version (2008) for public consultation.

The overall aim of the Rhondda Cynon Taf LBAP is "to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Rhondda Cynon Taf".

The following objectives describe what is needed to achieve the overall aim:

- Translate UK Action Plans to the local level;
- Identify other locally important habitats and species, through local consultation;
- Identify key partners;
- Develop achievable actions;
- Monitor progress in achieving LBAP actions; and
- Monitor biodiversity in Rhondda Cynon Taf

The LBAP (2008) maintains that global climate change is being created, and that if biodiversity conservation is to be ultimately successful, it must be integrated into every day activities and be firmly based on sustainable practice and protocol. For instance, into pre-planning and dialogue so to avoid future conflict and delays.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

The key issues to be addressed by the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP have been identified by making an assessment of the following:

- The results of pre deposit consultation with key stakeholder;
- The results of the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Exercise; and
- A review of baseline social, economic and environmental information;

The issues identified through this process will inform directly the development of the spatial strategy for the LDP.

#### *Pre Deposit Consultation*

Climate change related issues identified are as follows:

- Protection of the environment

#### *Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment*

The Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment identified the following climate change related issues:

- There are 20 wind turbines in the Plan area. Part of the County Borough is encompassed by one of the proposed TAN 8 (Wales) Strategic Search Areas.
- The topography and water environment of Rhondda Cynon Taf means that large areas of the valley floors are prone to flooding, especially along river frontages where ribbon development has occurred.
- Poor access to facilities.
- 62% of people travel to work by car, ranking 19th out of 376 for England and Wales.

Key trends identified from the available baseline data linked to climate change are as follows:

- An increase in emissions per capita of CO<sub>2</sub> as a result of car usage over other forms of transport;
- An increase in flooding in low-lying areas.

*Baseline Information*

Climate change related issues identified are as follows:

- Car ownership in Rhondda Cynon Taf has grown since 1991 from 60% to 68% in 2001 (Office for National Statistics);
- The dominant mode of transport for travelling in Rhondda Cynon Taf is the private car. When travelling to work for example, 74% of residents travel by car, 10% on foot and 8% use public transport (Office for National Statistics);
- The volume of motor vehicle traffic on the roads of Rhondda Cynon Taf increased by 13% between 1996 – 2004. This is in line with the growth in road traffic in Wales for the same period (Welsh Transport Statistics 2005).

**5. PREFERRED STRATEGY**

The Preferred Strategy provides the following policy framework for the mitigation of climate change in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Paragraph 4.2 of the Preferred Strategy (January 2007) lists 16 objectives for the LDP. The following objectives are the most relevant to the topic area:

- Provide an environment that encourages a healthy and safe lifestyle and promotes well being;

- Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable modes of transport;
- Provide for a sustainable economy;
- Protect and enhance the diversity and abundance of wildlife habitats and native species;
- Manage the effects of climate change; and
- Increase the supply of renewable energy and reduce energy consumption.

*Development Strategy*

Paragraphs 6.1 – 6.11 of the Preferred Strategy sets out a development strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf. The strategy area is divided into two distinct parts: -

- Northern Strategy Area, and
- Southern Strategy Area

The Northern Strategy area comprises the key settlements of Tonypany, Porth, Treorchy, Treherbert, Ferndale, Tylorstown, Mountain Ash and Hirwaun and the principal town of Aberdare. In this area the emphasis is on building sustainable communities and halting the process of depopulation and decline.

The Southern Strategy area includes the principal towns of Pontypridd and Llantrisant and key settlements of Tonyrefail and Llanharan. In the south of the County Borough the emphasis is on sustainable growth that benefits Rhondda Cynon Taf as a whole.

The strategy recognises the important role that principal towns and key settlements play in providing services of both local and county importance. Where possible, development will be focused on the principal towns and key settlements of the County Borough in order to support and reinforce the important role of these centres play as places for social and economic activity.

### *Climate Change*

Paragraphs 6.22 – 6.23 of the Preferred Strategy provides a strategy for the protection of the environment. Climate change has the potential to have a negative impact on the environment of Rhondda Cynon Taf. As a result, it is important that the need for the protection of the environment of Rhondda Cynon Taf is highlighted.

The paragraphs are as follows:

*“The natural environment of Rhondda Cynon Taf has seen considerable changes over the past 30 years. As the pressures put upon it by heavy industry have subsided, the visual and wildlife qualities that are unique to the area have been able to thrive and in some cases, return. However, the landscapes and biodiversity that exist within the northern strategy area and the undulating countryside of the valleys mouths and Vale fringe in the southern strategy area are still under continuous pressure from the large human population that lives there.*

*The Strategy will play a vital role in securing an appropriate balance between protection of the natural environment and historic heritage. In order to maintain and improve the local environment, the Strategy is based on providing a high level*

*of protection for important features as well as providing a basis for positive policies on issues such as design, conservation and amenity provision.”*

### *Strategic Policy*

The strategic policy that is broadly linked to climate change is as follows:

### **SP 3 – Sustainable Development**

**The development and use of land throughout the County Borough will be determined on the basis of the area’s housing, economic and social needs, protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment, environmental capacity, prudent use of resources, transportation and infrastructure considerations, mixture of uses, high standards of design, and minimising of energy consumption.**

### **Representations to the Preferred Strategy**

Representations made in respect of the climate change element of the Preferred Strategy fall broadly into 2 areas – representations in respect of Strategic Policy 3 – Sustainable Development and a generalised representation in relation to climate change.

Outlined below is a summary of the main representations submitted in respect of these areas  
Representation to Strategic Policy SP3 – Sustainable Development

Issue: Support is expressed for the strategic objective of policy SP3 .

Response: Support Welcomed.

*General representation in relation to climate change*

Issue: It is not clear as to what climate change specifically means for RCT and how it is being/intends to be addressed

Response: The issue of climate change is an essential element of the SA/SEA process. The LDP has, and will continue to be, subject to a vigorous SA/SEA Assessment. This process will ensure that the LDP has full regard to the issue of climate change.

In addition to the SA/SEA process, the Council has produced a topic paper which explains in detail the approach to be taken with regards to climate change in the emerging LDP and contains an additional draft strategic policy to specifically address the issue of climate change.

## **6. DRAFT LDP POLICY**

### Additional Strategic Policy for Climate Change

#### **SP 17 – Climate Change**

**Rhondda Cynon Taf will seek to address climate change and reduce energy demand by: -**

#### **A) Mitigating the causes of climate change through:**

- i) Requiring development proposals to reduce their predicted c02 emissions by a minimum of 10%;**
- ii) Implementing thw waste hierarchy**
- iii) Supporting development proposals that encourage the reuse of existing buildings and brownfield sites**
- iv) Promoting the provision of renewable energy generation from microgeneration equipment in new and existing development and refurbished development: and**
- v) Supporting Development proposals that incorporate decentralised heating, cooling and power networks powered by renewable energy sources, or that connect to existing Combined Heat and Power or communal/district heating networks where the potential to convert to a renewable energy source has been examined and possible.**

#### **B) Adapting to direct and indirect impacts of climate change through:**

- i) Requiring the integration of nature conservation into new developments, and for development proposals to minimise, monitor and mitigate against the impacts on soil carbon and on site surrounding biodiversity**
- ii) Requiring flood risk assessments on development proposals in 1:100 year foodplains**
- iii) Managing flood risk through incorporating measures in design and construction to reduce the effects of flooding, including sustainable**

- drainage systems (SUDS) and flood resilient design for infrastructure and property**
- iv) **Requiring new development to reduce the demand for drinkable quality water through recycling rainwater and grey water recycling; and**
- v) **Supporting climate responsive development including location, orientation, density, layout, built form, ensuring in-built flexibility for varying uses over the lifetime of the development, low carbon design and the reuse of existing buildings and brownfield sites.**

Evidence from the UK Climate Impact Programme (UKCIP) suggests that climate change is happening. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change highlights that we are already experiencing the effects of climate change and if these changes deepen and intensify, there will be even more extreme impacts.

The UKCIP has produced scenarios for changes in Wales over the period up to 2080. The potential impacts in Wales of the changes, as suggested by these scenarios, include increased direct risks of:

- More extreme weather events including drier summers;
- Storminess and flash flooding leading to a greater risk of flooding and pressure on sewer systems;
- A risk of ice sheets melting and thermal expansion of the oceans, leading to rising sea-levels and the risk of coastal and river damage/erosion;
- Very high summer temperatures causing health problems;

- Permanent changes in the natural environment such as habitat and species loss, for example in upland and wetland areas;
- Summer water shortages and low stream flows (coupled with higher demand);
- Subsidence in prone areas; and
- Thermal discomfort in buildings and health problems in summer, including heat-related deaths linked to air pollution

Indirect impacts for Wales from the effect of climate change on other parts of the world include:

- Migration of people from vulnerable areas;
- Movement and loss of species and habitats; and
- Changes in food supplies and tourism.

The Earth's climate has undergone change over long periods of time and has caused ice ages or desertification. Previously, these changes were driven by long-term natural processes, such as sun spot activity, geological processes or the cycle of the Earth's orbit around the Sun.

The Welsh Assembly Government's 'Renewable Energy Route Map for Wales' sets out that the climate is changing much more quickly than ever before and the change in temperature mirrors the increase in atmospheric carbon due to human activity.

Carbon dioxide and other gases, collectively known as 'greenhouse gases', act as a partial blanket that increases the amount of heat from the sun that is trapped by the

atmosphere. Since the industrial revolution, concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased, reducing heat loss from the Earth and resulting in warming of the Earth's surface and lower atmosphere. It is this warming effect that will have a profound impact on our climate and in turn on our lives. The 'Renewable Energy Route Map for Wales' sets out that it is important to find ways in which to adapt to this change. The LDP Core Policy on climate change will seek to provide adaptation techniques to achieve this.

The Welsh Assembly Government believes that climate change is the greatest long-term challenge facing the world today. Addressing climate change is therefore the Welsh Assembly Government's principal concern for achieving sustainable development. The Draft MIPPS on Climate Change produced by the Welsh Assembly Government provides guidance on how local planning authorities should address the issue of climate change.

The Draft MIPPS on Climate Change advises that local planning authorities should include within their development plans a policy requiring major developments to reduce their predicted CO2 emissions by a minimum of 10% (from the current baseline required by building regulations) through improvements to the energy performance of buildings, efficient supply of heat, cooling and power, and on site renewable energy.

The Draft MIPPS on Climate Change indicates that LDPs should provide policies that aim to reduce the overall negative environmental impact of major developments and to improve climate change adaptability in the plan area.

## **7. FURTHER ADVICE**

If you require any further advice or assistance in respect this or other LDP documents or wish to be placed on the Council's consultation database please contact a member of the Local Development Plan Team at:

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