

## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**28<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017**

#### **OUTLINE PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ECO PARK AT THE BRYN PICA WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITY**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS AND STREETCARE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR A CRIMMINGS.**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Cabinet with an overview of outline plans associated with the concept of an Eco Park proposed for development at the Bryn Pica Site, Aberdare. The Director of Highways and Streetcare is working in partnership with Welsh Government to attract key recycling businesses to the region in order improve the local economy, increase the value of materials collected by the council and reduce the carbon footprint of recycling.
- 1.2 To inform members of this potential new development.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Give approval for the Director of Highways and Streetcare to undertake discussions with appropriate government agencies and private companies to seek various avenues for funding.
- 2.2 Note and support ongoing work to progress this scheme into a deliverable project, including necessary planning and permitting requirements.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Director of Highways and Streetcare is working in partnership with Welsh Government to build on the concept of an Eco Park Development at the Bryn Pica Waste Management Facility in Aberdare. As a leader in street cleansing, waste collection and recycling, this Council is fully committed to investing in Jobs and Infrastructure for both current and future generations. The proposal

further demonstrates a commitment in Wales to decentralised Renewable Energy and Closed Loop Recycling. Developments such as the one proposed at Bryn Pica will help Wales achieve it's 'One Planet' vision (Wellbeing of Future Generation Act, Welsh Government 2015).

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Wales has fast become a nation of recyclers, with the country ranking within the top 3 in Europe in a 2017 global review of recycling. During the 2016 / 2017 accounting period the communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf recycled 76,745 Tonnes of waste, which represents 64.4% of the 119,157 Tonnes collected from households. The glass, metal, paper and plastics we collect and sort provide a valuable resource for manufacturers across the UK and beyond. Where these materials are made into new products of a similar type, we call this closed-loop recycling. For example melting and remoulding plastics into new shapes or similarly melting and re-using glass. The green economy presents great opportunities for improving local skills and provide much needed jobs.
- 4.2 Welsh Government's 2014 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), indicates that some of the most deprived communities in Wales are located within (or in close proximity to) Rhondda Cynon Taf. Two of the top 10% deprived communities\* (LSOA: Pen-y-waun 2 and Merthyr Vale 2) are in close proximity to the Council's recycling centre at Bryn Pica. Waste Management jobs at Bryn Pica have developed into one of the larger sectors of local employment and Council Officers have assessed the opportunity to develop this further.
- 4.3 The Bryn Pica Waste Management Facility (Rhondda Cynon Taf) produces renewable forms of electrical and heat energy along with significant volumes of segregated waste materials. Recycling operations result in the segregation and sale of a range of material resources, with an annual throughput in excess of 60,000 Tonnes.
- 4.4 The proposals for Bryn Pica are centred on the provision of light industrial units reserved specifically for organisations that specialise in closed loop recycling. The scheme will result in 80,000 square feet of covered floor-space shared between 5 separate buildings, with options to combine and connect as required by perspective tenants.
- 4.5 The unique selling point of this development is the availability of renewable heat and power at competitive rates. This will attract organisations with a strong corporate commitment to sustainable operations and the reduction of our carbon footprint. The site benefits from an existing source of usable heat produced by the Tomorrows' Valley Food Waste Treatment Plant. Current estimates indicate that available heat will be in the order of 3,000MW per annum. Economically, supplying renewable energy of this form continues to receive subsidy from central government.

- 4.6 The Bryn Pica site is ideally placed to integrate with markets within and beyond Wales, situated just off the A465 (Heads of the Valley Road) with access to the M4 and the M50. The development site is located within the area designated as the Cynon Gateway Reenergising the Region and is highlighted within the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) and being suitable for waste management and recycling developments.

## **5. FUTURE REVIEWS**

- 5.1 This initial report is to inform members of this exciting proposal and it is anticipated that further reports will follow as and when the project progresses

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no equality and / or diversity implications from this report.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 There are no immediate consultation requirements from this report.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no immediate financial implications aligned to this report.
- 8.2 The Director of Highways and Streetcare is currently in discussion with a number of Welsh Government departments on accessing potential funding streams for a range of projects and this will be part of ongoing reports as referenced in paragraph 5.1.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 There are no immediate legal implications aligned to this report.

## **10. LINKS TO COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 10.1 The connectivity of material and energy sources to areas of demand is an ongoing challenge for society. Rapid changes, resulting from policy intervention continue to emphasise the need for integrated energy, transport and economic developments. The transmission of energy and the transportation of recyclable materials are key challenges in the UK's aspirations of transitioning to a low carbon, circular economy. Co-locating and connecting economic activity and renewable energy developments can make a significant contribution in delivering on this challenge.

10.2 RCT Council's 2016-2020 Corporate Plan (The Way Ahead) sets out key priorities for the organisation. These key priorities are strongly aligned with Welsh Governments Future Generations Act (2015) and are summarised under three categories:

- **ECONOMY** - Building a strong economy
- **PEOPLE** - Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone
- **PLACE** - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work

1. By harnessing and making available to end users, cheap sustainable energy, the council can encourage commercial organisations to locate operations with this area of the Borough Council. This will in part help to build a stronger local ECONOMY.
2. Successful creation of an eco enterprise park at Bryn Pica will increase employment opportunities within Cynon Valley. The provision of employment at a range of skill levels will assist the Council in its aspirations of promoting independence and positive lives for local PEOPLE.
3. By harnessing cheap sustainable (green) energy and using this energy to facilitate the local circular economy, the Council will be making a contribution to the nation's sustainability agenda. This is a key element of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

## 11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The outline concept for the Bryn Pica Eco Park is provided to members. The proposed scheme will attract leaders in closed loop recycling and provide jobs and training for local people. The scheme will set an example on how we can decentralise energy demands and reduce the carbon footprint of waste management and recycling, whilst increasing economic output in the region. Job creation and improving the skills of the local workforce is fundamental to the success of the project.
- 11.2 Approval is sought to continue this work to allow council officers to be dynamic in identifying and reacting to funding opportunities relevant to energy and waste related infrastructure developments.

### **Other Information:-**

#### ***Relevant Scrutiny Committee –***

Public Service Delivery, Communities & prosperity Scrutiny Committee

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### Bryn Pica Eco Park – Outline Plan Sept-17

