



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

18TH NOVEMBER 2019

COMMUNITY USE OF UNDERUSED/VACANT RCT LAND

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE ESTATES IN DISCUSSION
WITH THE CABINET'S CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPION (COUNCILLOR
RHYS LEWIS)**

**Author(s): David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates and Hilary Reid,
Head of Operational Property.**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to introduce a streamlined process to allow Communities to apply for and use underused/vacant Council owned land for the purposes of garden use in support of the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Steering Group:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Agrees to consult with external parties to consider the contents of the proposed procedure and incorporate feedback/comments where appropriate.
- 2.3 Receive a future report to formally recommend to Cabinet a new procedure to simplify the process for Community use of underused/vacant Council owned land.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The contents of this supporting paper on 'Corporate Estates Energy and Carbon Reduction' provides key background information for the Discussion Paper – Work Programme for the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group meeting.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council receives many requests from members of the public to use small parcels of land for various forms of gardening operations. These requests are from both individuals and groups and the land in question is usually small in nature and unused, sitting vacant and often attracting unwelcome uses such as fly-tipping.
- 4.2. Currently these applications are dealt with by the Estate Management team in conjunction with the RCT Together team. The usual process for this would be to provide certain quite in depth information:
- Expression of interest
 - Business plan based upon circa 6 pages of detailed requirements
 - A fact sheet/guidance of circa 20 pages
- 4.3 This information gathering has been case experience driven and is usually the best way to allow a group to progress successfully toward asset transfer and/or grant funding support.
- 4.4 In some instances, it has been highlighted by applicants that they think the process is too onerous and that the scope of the information required is not appropriate to the scale of the land use request. This is particularly so where the applicant is an individual.

5. PROPOSED STREAMLINED PROCESS

- 5.1 In order to protect the Council's position in terms of (for example):
- Insurance cover;
 - Regaining possession of the land at a future date;
 - Mis-use/inappropriate use of the land;
 - The land and/or items placed upon it falling into disrepair;

it is important that a formal document is entered into with the third party no matter how small the land parcel but it would be beneficial to create a less detailed, streamlined process for this area of land use.

- 5.2 Therefore, the procedure currently in place has been reviewed with the above in mind and a simpler application form has been produced to

streamline the scrutiny of the applicant(s) ability to take on the project. A copy of the proposed application form is included as Appendix A.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required with regard to this report.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Feedback/comments will be taken on board following the presentation of this report to the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group together with any further consultation deemed necessary prior to introducing the new procedure.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this supporting report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 10.1 This report provides information to support the main Discussion Paper – Work Programme for the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group. The future actions that arise as a result of the recommendations of the main report will be considered by the Council's Cabinet and it will take full regard to the seven national wellbeing goals.

11 CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The proposed new application form will streamline the process for individuals/groups to apply to use underused/vacant Council owned land for Community benefits such as creating gardens, orchards and other beneficial environmental/sustainable uses.

Contact Officers; David Powell 01443 424144, Hilary Reid 01443 281188

Appendix A - Proposed New Application Form



Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Application to

**USE COUNCIL OWNED LAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF
GARDENING AND ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES ONLY**

2019/20

1

Full address of site you are interested in (please attach sketch plan if possible)

2

Contact name:

Name of organisation (if applicable):

Address:

email:

Tel:

If your application is on behalf of an organisation, please complete sections 3 and 4

3

Is your organisation: tick box	Please
A registered charity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unregistered organisation/Constituted Voluntary organisation Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charity or other Registration number (if applicable):	

4

Briefly describe the main activities of your organisation.

5

Outline the specific proposals that require the use of the site including :
What will the land be used for?
How long is the land needed?

6

Any additional information you wish the Council to consider

7

Signature of main contact:

Date:

Return form to: E-mail: hilary.s.reid@rctcbc.gov.uk or to: Mrs Hilary S Reid,
Corporate and Frontline Services, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough
Council, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash, CF45 4UQ. Contact
Telephone number: 01443 281188

GUIDANCE NOTES TO HELP WITH YOUR APPLICATION

THE FORM:

- give as much detail as you can-include photographs and location maps if possible
- telephone the estates team on 01443 281188 for any assistance
- the form can be filled in and emailed to us or filled in and posted. hand written forms are acceptable
- it is usually helpful for you to keep a copy for your records
- the form will form the starting point for your interaction with the case officer dealing with your application
- the case officer will contact you following receipt of your application and you will have a named contact from there on

THE PROCESS:

- once the form is received it will be reviewed by the case officer having regard to various issues for example: the councils title deeds and council department comments/advice
- a letter will then be sent to you either listing the council's requirements for the use of the area by you to go ahead or explaining that the council cannot proceed in this case
- if you are offered the use of the land, the letter will ask you to confirm that you wish to proceed on that basis
- once your acceptance is received, the council will create a formal agreement for you to sign and you will be able to use the area from that time
- at this point there will be a fee of £60 to cover the council's costs
- if you need help with funding support etc please contact the community development team on 01443 425368 or email RCTTOGETHER@RCTCBC.GOV.UK.