



Sustainable Wales
Cymru Gynaliadwy



Response by
Sustainable Wales - Cymru Gynaliadwy
To Porthcawl Regeneration Plans – Porthcawl
a Low Carbon Community?





Regeneration Plans for Porthcawl – a low carbon community?

Sustainable Wales - Cymru Gynaliadwy is a charity that has been based in Porthcawl and Bridgend County Borough for over twenty years. It is progressive in outlook and aims to encourage behavioural change within the community

<https://www.sustainablewales.org.uk/>

The NGO has always taken a keen interest in development plans for the county borough, and at this time of planetary climate emergency, this interest is more relevant than ever. The organisation would like to see Bridgend Borough Council at the forefront of leading Porthcawl's transition into a low-carbon community.

As Porthcawl often achieves c60% and up to 95% local renewable energy generation we potentially have a head start. <https://carbontracer.westernpower.co.uk/>

Local generation we believe is from Cenin Renewables -Parc Stormi
<http://www.ceninrenewables.co.uk>)

The Context

At the end of 2018, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that we have 12 years to make the necessary changes to limit a rise in global temperatures by 1.5°C.

Failure to act will see a significant and accelerating increase in sea levels and flooding, extreme and abrupt changes to weather patterns, crop failures, and extinctions of plant, insect and animal species. This will lead to global economic disruption and a humanitarian crisis, impacting billions of people.

Sir David Attenborough says:

"Right now, we are facing a man-made disaster of global scale, our greatest threat in thousands of years....If we don't take action, the collapse of our civilisations and the extinction of much of the natural world is on the horizon. The world's people have spoken, their message is clear. Time is running out."

"Are we the first generation to know we are destroying our planet and the last one that can do anything about it?" World Wide Fund For Nature.

Although the situation is urgent, political action is painfully slow. The UK remains the second largest emitter of carbon dioxide in the EU after Germany, with latest

statistics showing the UK was responsible for 11.6% of all EU emissions in 2016 (Eurostat, 2018).

Sustainable Wales believes that governments at all levels must meet the challenge posed by accelerating climate change and ecological collapse.

The United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG) represent the global goals that governments, civil society organisations, and businesses around the world have agreed to achieve together.

UN Sustainable Development Goals



In Wales, the ‘One Planet Development’ policy and ‘Wellbeing of Future Generations Act’ show that Wales can lead the way in progressive policy.

However, these do not motivate governments to act in accordance with the urgency of the situation.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act

A Prosperous Wales	A Resilient Wales	A Healthier Wales	A More Equal Wales	A Wales of Cohesive Communities	A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language	A Globally Responsible Wales
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The 2019 Welsh Government’s **‘Prosperity For All - A Low Carbon Pathway For Wales’** launched March 2019, sets out plans and policies in line with 2050 targets https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/low-carbon-delivery-plan_1.pdf

(But these 2050 targets are already being described as out of date!)

Therefore, Sustainable Wales would expect the Porthcawl Regeneration Plan to contribute meaningfully to the UN SDGs – and also implement those values within the Wales’ Well-being of Future Generations Act and what is now being described as **the climate emergency**.

Bridgend County Borough Council response to Climate Change

The ambitious BCBC Local Area Energy Strategy and Smart Energy Plan to reduce Bridgend’s greenhouse emissions by 95%, outlined in February, ’19 will help decarbonise Bridgend county by 2050.

However, the project activity above seems to be located north of the M4. Any new development in the south of the borough should add to and not jeopardise the excellent transformative plans above the M4. Porthcawl also needs a ‘Smart Living Programme’.

Sustainable Wales would also hope that Bridgend Borough Council’s pension funds are diverted away from investments in fossil fuels as soon as possible, being redirected into local renewable and energy efficient projects, reducing fuel poverty and creating local jobs.

Also we would like to know if the Borough Council has a renewable energy provider?

The Built Environment Challenge

Residential/new homes/flats /supermarket/shops development.

Welsh Government Planning Policy 2018 legislation secures a presumption in favour of sustainable development. ‘**Sustainable places**’ are the goal of the land-use planning system in Wales. (Planning Policy Wales Edition 10)



Housing

In the 2019 report "[UK housing: Fit for the future?](#)" the Climate Change Commission (CCC) warns that the UK's legally-binding climate change targets will not be met without the near-complete elimination of greenhouse gas emissions from UK buildings. The report finds that emission reductions from the UK's 29 million homes have stalled, while energy use in homes – which accounts for 14% of total UK emissions – increased between 2016 and 2017.

Thus developers – must implement measures that ensure new homes will be ready for the future.

New Homes

New homes, therefore, should be built to be low-carbon, energy and water efficient, and climate resilient, using locally sourced building materials and workforce. They should be designed for adaptability, deconstruction and reuse at the end of their lives.

The costs of building to tight specifications are not prohibitive, and getting the design right from the outset is far cheaper than retrofitting later.

The CCC (<https://www.theccc.org.uk>) states, from 2025 at the latest, that no new homes should be connected to the gas grid. These homes should be heated using low-carbon energy sources, have ultra-high levels of energy efficiency alongside appropriate ventilation, and be timber-framed where possible.



BedZED [project](#) sustainable housing, first conceived in 1997

The excellent report, from the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA), **Re-energising Wales: A plan for Wales' renewable energy future - Essential actions to re-energise Wales by 2035**, [available here](#) was launched by the First Minister, Mark Drakeford. It says energy consumption could be cut by more than 60% - saving the average householder over £600 per year – if homes were designed to “homes as power stations standards”.

This means these houses generate, store and release their own solar energy. Thus, they produce enough energy to balance their overall demand making them energy-neutral, whilst building community and local ownership.

Thus, how will the Porthcawl Regeneration building contracts stipulate these types of expectations?

Decarbonising Transport and Business Development?

Sustainable Wales agrees with many other NGO's that reducing the numbers of cars on the road should be a priority for all levels of government. The necessity is driven by climate change and to improve air quality and health, including the market direction against diesel and older petrol vehicles.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050, transport accounting for 13% here. Transport emissions (car dominated) are flatlining, the above report states. Walking and cycling are static, bus services are declining.



Electric Bus Fleet

The IWA report "[Decarbonising Transport in Wales](#)" calls for a change in the culture of Wales and a move away from reliance on the car.



Bike sharing service

Mobility as a service will become an increasingly attractive alternative. In this model, private citizens choose not to own a car but instead have a contract or service agreement with a supplier such as a car club or taxi on demand.

Planning for community car-share parking, bike stands and rapid EV charging points will be essential.

Communities that own their own energy supply/charging stations could also operate a not-for-profit car club.

Also, 20mph signage would be helpful to reduce emissions in public and residential areas.



A wider community transport/travel plan for the “Regeneration” area should be linked to the Bridgend County plans and proposed south Wales Metro Area. **We believe there should be plans for a rail-link, small community buses or even free public transport.**

The decisions we make now will have a significant impact on society’s ability to absorb and adapt to the changes predicted by the IPCC.

Future generations will judge us on our courage to make the urgent change we know are needed.

Additional Particular Responses to the Regeneration Outline Plan

Architectural design, visual appearance, local sourcing are, of course, also important to Sustainable Wales and to SUSSED www.sussedwales.com members and volunteers.

Residential/Houses/Flats

Sustainable Wales would hope that Porthcawl designs are more architecturally interesting than those attached - pictures attached (Cardiff, Penarth, Barry)



New buildings must be designed also with shaded areas and awareness of the risks of overheating. There must be a focus on ambitious water efficiency, property-level flood protection, sustainable drainage systems, cultural and green spaces. For example, less tarmac, provision of trees etc on streets and potable drinking water fountains, vegetation on roofs and consideration for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and electric vehicle owners.

Supermarket

It seems that “Regeneration” is dependent upon gaining the commitment of a supermarket. There currently seems to be a downturn in superstore expansion plans across the UK.

However, Sustainable Wales suggests that the building, as planned at the northern end of the map, is sited within what the public will immediately recognise as a marine-seaside styled environment. Thus, the visual appearance should be in-keeping with the character of our **seaside** town. This would be a clear ‘Porthcawl-style’ welcome to visitors.



M&S Plan A supermarket eco-designs

Access to Town Centre

The Porthcawl Civic Trust has expressed concerns regarding the supermarket's location and its impact on town centre footfall.

Crucially, clear links and signage need to be made between this new development and the town centre.

The Porthcawl Chamber of Trade has conveyed repeatedly to BCBC its concerns regarding reduced town centre footfall.

Hillsboro and Dock Street are crucial pedestrian links. In the case of James Street/Bandstand access is **directly** into the centre of the town.

Pedestrian access is currently wholly inadequate from Hillsboro Car Park to James Street/Bandstand. It is uninviting and ugly; not pram / disabled user-friendly; dominated by heavy, sometimes dangerous delivery lorries, vans and cars with polluting vehicle exhaust emissions.



The proposed Town Centre Pedestrian Links at James Street and Dock Street will therefore need to address these issues and show a plan for significant improvement.

Hotel

Sustainable Wales is disappointed to see that the hotel development seems to be limited to “budget” options, as this might conflict with the numerous existing Bed and Breakfast businesses in the town.

We would also expect, as with the supermarket, that the hotel architectural appearance has character and quality fitting with a ‘seaside design’.

Leisure

Ideas for the development of the space could be ongoing, utilising the opportunity it provides for ‘one-off’ events and activities throughout the ‘Regeneration’ period.

Sea Defences

We welcome increased sea defences and the vision of a wide ‘Boulevard-style’ promenade.

Community Participation

Sustainable Wales believes that ongoing consultation with the community is vital. As our public meeting on 19th November 2018 demonstrated, there are strong feelings locally, and an information vacuum risks exacerbating any perceived divisions and negative attitudes.

Sustainable Wales would therefore request a consultation plan from BCBC. This should include a timeframe, and an idea of how and by whom engagement with different groups will be undertaken.

This consultation plan should also indicate what elements of the plan will be consulted on, i.e. impact on John Street of the new retail outlet; the style of sea defences and promenade; the necessity for green spaces amongst housing units; general sustainability; and potential for amenity value to local residents.

As the generation most affected by regeneration, young voices **must** be heard, their contributions actively sought, through schools, youth groups, social media, and local debates.



As the [speech at the UN by 15 year old Greta Thunberg](#) and the global climate strikes led by school children have shown, there is a growing depth of feeling and awareness of the emergency of climate change in the younger generations that must be acknowledged and engaged.

Conclusion

The regeneration strategy needs to consider Porthcawl's Unique Selling Point and what opportunities there are to develop, invigorate, renew and refresh a tired old town, bringing it swiftly into alignment with the needs of future generations. Those needs will be very different from those of the past. The extremely challenging context outlined in the UN IPCC report cannot be ignored.

It is therefore vital that sustainable options are fundamentally incorporated at the strategic level at the earliest opportunity and implemented in detail through on-going consultation.

Sustainable Wales looks forward to the Council's response.

Director Margaret Minhinnick, Trustee Peter Morgan.



Appendix & Plan Map

Sustainable Wales

Sustainable Wales' (SW) mission is to encourage solutions for the unsustainable way we live and to ignite passion for sustainable living practices. The aims are to be an organisation that helps revitalise the local economy, promotes social progress and well-being, is enterprising, creative and internationally aware, working with communities, voluntary groups, businesses and government. (Activities are focused locally but potentially replicable). The group believe in this way we can foster a fairer, and an exciting future for Wales that doesn't cost us the Earth.

www.sustainablewales.org.uk.

Importantly, activities include the concepts/principles/ outcomes embedded in sustainable development and the 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/> and the Environment of Wales act <https://gov.wales/environment-wales-act-2016-factsheets>. Whilst being mindful also of the United Nations 'Transforming Our World - the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

The projects, currently are all voluntary, take a community development role - responding locally to global issues with a 'people and planet' focus. We concentrate on 'lifestyle' and 'quality of life', our collective responsibilities and opportunities, **creating engagement activities and where possible practical opportunities** for people to be able to respond to the issues involved in the green and ethical agenda. Advocating also good practice by citizens, producers and politicians -to enhance community well-being and environmental security for the long-term.

We also encourage local ownership, participation and a self-help entrepreneurial spirit – we feel this is a practical way to 'mainstream' sustainable development. Current activities outlined are here <https://www.sustainablewales.org.uk/current-projects>

The charity manages our sister organisation **SUSSED Wales**, a community co-operative, retailing green, local and fairly-traded goods from a town-centre shop. It offers democratic participation in its decision-making encouraging active citizenship, not just passive consumerism. It also offers the public a practical opportunity to respond to the sustainable development agenda www.sussedwales.com.

Importantly, it currently financially supports SW's administration and office space. SUSSED has an environmental management system.

Bridgend Fairtrade Partnership is coordinated by the charity <https://www.sustainablewales.org.uk/fairtrade-landing-page>. Various events and activities are shared as well as offered by each organisation involved.

Our **Green Room** hosts a range of cultural events. It continues to expand with regular performances, poetry open mics, pop up Cafés, swap shops and workshops. See our [events](#) page for updates on what's currently scheduled. <https://www.sustainablewales.org.uk/green-room>

The **Bridgend Local Energy Group** was established by the charity <https://www.sustainablewales.org.uk/> to explore options for developing local, community-based low carbon energy initiatives. This occurred with the support of RENEW Wales after a series of engagement activities in 2017 stimulating awareness and highlighted by Sustainable Wales' production Shine a Light? campaign, <https://www.sustainablewales.org.uk/shine-light>.

The new Group's work is focused on the idea of a "green" energy efficient electric bus, powered with the "free" support offered by a local supplier of renewable energy, Cenin at Parc Stormy, Porthcawl. <http://www.ceninrenewables.co.uk/>

