

<b>Report to</b>	Council
<b>Date of meeting</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2020
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Cllr Brian Jones, Cllr Tony Thomas, Cllr Graham Timms / Judith Greenhalgh (Chief Executive)
<b>Report author</b>	Helen Vaughan-Evans (Project Manager)
<b>Title</b>	Climate and Ecological Emergency- Progress Report on Council Motion

## **1. What is the report about?**

1.1 This report is about the progress being made by the cross-party Climate and Ecological Emergency working group in implementing the actions contained within the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration Council Motion.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

2.1 To provide information regarding the work done to date.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

3.1 For Council to note the progress made by the Climate and Ecological Emergency cross-party working group and the proposal to implement a programme management structure by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 to deliver on our ambitions as set out in the motion.

3.2 For Council to note the imminent (01.04.20) Welsh Government (WG) requirement on scope and reduction of carbon emissions which will form the basis of our action plans.

3.3 For Council to note the date for a public meeting (25.02.20) to gather public ideas to feed into on our developing plans.

## 4. Report details

### 4.1 Current activity

4.1.1 There is a range of activity that has been and already being delivered by the Council which is contributing to our climate change and ecological improvement ambitions. This includes work delivered under and across our existing corporate plan, which includes an 'Environment' priority. Please see Appendix A for the range of activity.

4.2 The Motion contained a set of actions and a progress update is provided below.

### 4.3 Immediately declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency

4.3.1 This was passed unanimously by Council Motion on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2019 and committed the Council to a set of actions contained within it. Please see Appendix B for the Motion.

### 4.4 Commit to making the authority net carbon zero by 2030 at the latest

4.4.1 It is the intention for the Council to align itself with the WG target contained within the "*Prosperity for All: Transition to a Low Carbon Wales*" action plan for "*the public sector to become net carbon zero by 2030*" and to participate consistently with the new greenhouse gas reporting mechanism WG will be launching on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

4.4.2 To become net carbon zero the Council needs to reduce its carbon emissions as much as is practical and then off-set the remaining emissions via carbon sequestration. We currently monitor and target reduction in our scope 1 and 2 emissions. It is likely that we will be required to monitor and target reduction in scope 3 emissions too following WG announcement in April 2020. Please see Appendix C for a list of what is likely to be included in scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

### 4.5 Set up a task and finish group to draw up a clear plan within 6 months to achieve the above, including ways to enhance biodiversity in Denbighshire

4.5.1 A cross party political working group has been set up chaired by Cllr Graham Timms. Please see Appendix D for task and finish group membership.

4.5.2 The Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration has been interpreted into the following priorities for the Council:

- For the Council to become a net carbon zero organisation at the latest by 2030.

- For the Council to become an ecologically positive organisation at the latest by 2030.

For a brief description on both those priorities see Appendix E. This will be further developed by officers in the coming months.

4.5.3 These priorities go beyond current work being undertaken within the Environment Priority within the Corporate Plan 2017-2022 and within Business as Usual in terms of ambition, scope of emissions, timescale and current allocated resource. Thus it is recommended that a new programme management structure is established supported by dedicated project manager to provide the delivery framework to develop, source funding and deliver upon net carbon zero and ecologically positive actions. Please see Appendix F for an example programme management structure which will adapt as the action plans develop. The development of the net carbon zero and ecologically positive action plans will continue over 2020/21 and will feed into the Council's 2021/22 budget process.

4.5.4 There are number of pieces of work that have been identified early as “kick start” actions which are practical, feasible and affordable and have the potential to make a significant difference. These are outlined in Appendix G.

#### 4.6 *Call on the Welsh Government and UK Government to provide assistance and resources to enable us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance biodiversity*

4.6.1 A letter will be sent to Lesley Griffiths AM (Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs) from Cllr Brian Jones requesting that they assist the Council financially.

#### 4.7 *Work with partners across the public, private and third sector to help solve this climate and ecological emergency*

4.7.1 The Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board (PSB) is and will continue to be the mechanism for cross public sector work on carbon reduction and biodiversity improvement. Please see Appendix H for our PSB's Environment Priority description.

4.7.2 Opportunities have been taken to provide signposting to businesses within Denbighshire on the support available on low carbon and biodiversity improvement matters provided by others (e.g. the Carbon Trust) via the Economic Development teams email update to businesses and via their social media platforms.

4.7.3 A public meeting is being organised on 25.02.2020 where representatives from environmental improvement community and school groups can give their ideas to feed into the Council's developing plans.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

5.1 Whilst the Climate and Ecological Emergency transcends the Council's current priorities as expressed within the Corporate Plan 2017-2022, this work will make a direct contribution to the current Environment Priority (specifically 15% carbon reduction target and planting 18,000 more trees by 2022).

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

6.1 For the Council to become a net carbon zero and ecologically positive organisation at the latest by 2030 will require investment both revenue and capital to develop, implement, manage and monitor interventions to bring about the accelerated change required.

6.2 DCC financial budgets need to clearly align with the Council's climate and ecological priorities to ensure that the actions needed to achieve our targets are backed up by investment. Work is still ongoing on estimating the scale of this investment but we know it will be beyond the resources currently allocated 2020/21 onwards. Opportunities to apply for external funding, deliver invest to save and income generating projects will be maximised upon.

### **6.6 Impact on staff and other services**

6.6.1 It is in the gift of all staff and councillors to contribute to carbon reduction and ecological improvement in the way they behave whilst at work. Operating our Council in a low carbon and ecologically positive way will require us to design and deliver our services in a different way and will involve policy change. Such changes can be captured within service business plans.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment (WIA)?**

7.1 A WIA has not been undertaken at this time but will be to inform the development of our action plans.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

8.1 Plans have been and will continue to be developed in consultation with the political working group and officers across service areas. Public feedback on the Council's developing plans will be sought via an online consultation (21.01.20 – 25.02.20) and a Public Meeting being held on 25<sup>th</sup> February.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1 It is likely that significant investment will be required to address the issues and ambition highlighted in this report. Although it is important that external income sources are identified and maximised it is still likely that we will need to identify and earmark Denbighshire County Council resources also. In view of this a proposal to earmark £200k cash (one-off funding) from the Budget Mitigation Reserve in order to help progress the net carbon zero and ecologically positive work, has been included in the Budget Proposals recommended by Cabinet to Council. Further medium and long term investment will be considered during the Budget Process for 2021/22 and beyond as the details plans and funding schemes are put together.

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

10.1 Please see Appendix I.

## **11. Power to make the decision**

11.1 Although a decision is not being sought in this paper, Appendix J provide a brief description of the legislative context for the net carbon zero and ecological positive agendas.