

Notes of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group meeting

Date	30 / 09 / 2020
Time	10.30 to 12.00
Location	Web Ex Video Conference
Present	Cllr Gwyneth Kensler (GK); Cllr Bobby Feeley (BF); Cllr Barry Mellor (BM); Cllr Brian Jones (BJ); Cllr Arwel Roberts (AR); Cllr Graham Timms (GT)
Apologies	Cllr Joe Welch (JW); Cllr Tony Thomas (TT)
In attendance	Supporting Officers: Judith Greenhalgh (JG), Helen Vaughan-Evans (HVE), Joel Walley (JW), Nicola Kneale (NK), Tom Booty (TB); Howard Sutcliffe (HS); Liz Wilcox-Jones (LWJ) Member Observers: Cllr Martyn Holland (MH); Alan James (AJ), Meirick Lloyd Davies (MLD)

1. Welcome and apologies

Chair GT welcomed all to the meeting, first one since March and noted apologies.

Special welcome to new our Member observers and supporting officers new to the meetings LWJ and HS.

2. Notes and actions of last meeting

Minutes of last meeting agreed as accurate.

Group noted that even though the working group had not had a meeting, a lot of progress had happened by officers between March and September.

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Actions of last meeting reviewed and update provided by HVE. See summary table below.

ACTION	UPDATE
<p>HVE- add to April's agenda the following: More information on the ability to create a sub group to Y Panel and host discussion topics for continued engagement</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>On the agenda today.</p>
<p>HVE- send out an email to the mailing list letting them know the minutes of this meeting are available to be viewed online</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>Click here to access minutes</p>
<p>HVE- Work with Gary Williams in delivering on the recommended approach to build climate and ecological impact consideration into decision making. Paper to be taken to Corporate Governance Committee to then recommend approval to Council for the change to then be made to decision making framework.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper to Cabinet Briefing and Group Leaders in July- positively received. • Paper to Corporate Governance and Scrutiny Committee on 9th September- recommendations approved. • On the forward plan to seek approval by Full Council to make the changes on 13th October.
<p>HVE- to share the staff council and organisational response/action document with Staff Council.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p>

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ACTION	UPDATE
<p>HVE- to make the adjustments to the letter [to Lesley Griffiths AM] as suggested and work with Sharon Evans to have the letter sent from Cllr Brian Jones.</p>	<p>DEFERRED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action deferred until after COVID-19 emergency phase. • Working group agreed to leave writing for a few month and for HVE to put reviewing draft letter on the agenda for November.
<p>HVE- to liaise with relevant officers and BJ, TT and GT to make the arrangements for a Members workshop in May/June [in relation to the climate and ecological change strategy and action plan development]</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May/June workshop idea was not able to be progressed in light of COVID-19. • Engagement with Members now being done virtually via the MAGs in September and October.
<p>HVE- to contact Huw Rees with the request for an additional Countryside Services officer to join the officers who attend the political working group monthly meeting.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>Howard Sutcliffe (Countryside Operations Manager) has been invited to cross party working groups.</p>

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ACTION	UPDATE
<p>HVE- to make changes to April agenda and invite relevant additional officers to future meetings accordingly to the theme.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward plan for future meetings to be discussed today.

ACTIONS:

HVE- to add reviewing the draft letter to be sent from Cllr Brian Jones to Lesley Griffiths AM onto agenda for November's working group meeting.

3. Progress summary since March, including 'kick start' actions and timelines/tasks to the end of the financial year

Progress Summary

HVE updated the group on 'kick start actions' and took group through tasks progressed since March which included the following:

- Analysing the responses from the public engagement period.
- Cllr Brian Jones, Cllr Tony Thomas and Cllr Graham Timms attended 2 days training on Zero Carbon Britain delivered by Centre for Alternative Technology,
- Collating the net carbon zero baseline (2019/20)- carbon emissions and carbon sequestration.
- Completion of 2 hour workshops with all service areas on the strategy and action plan.

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- Deliberate 'no cut' of c.20 street scene sites over growing season to benefit biodiversity.
- Delivering plans for constitutional change and supporting processes/documents for decisions to have regard for tackling climate and ecological change.
- Modelling carbon emissions reduction and carbon sequestration increase pathways to get to net carbon zero by 2030.
- Recruiting Climate Change Project Officer (6 month internal secondment).
- Devising options for baselining Ecologically Positive Council (2019/20).
- Supporting specification development for procuring new energy management software for buildings.
- Facilitating workshops on developing bid for Community Woodlands NLHF funding.
- Liaison with Welsh Government Energy Service, securing free consultancy to complete ULEV Fleet Transition Study for electrifying fleet and grey fleet mileage and collating and submitting data required for ULEV study.
- Supporting community consortium in their bid to Welsh Government for Circular Economy Funding to introduce and reuse repair service in Mold, Llangollen and Ruthin.
- Feasibility work and early project management for potential Tree Nursery at Greengates West.
- Presentations to the Member Area Groups- Denbigh and Elwy completed.
- Climate and Ecological Change All Member Newsletter and public Newsletter (will be produced and sent every 6 months)

Group expressed thanks to officers for their hard work over this period.

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Discussion around options for eco-friendlier road surfacing, use of technology and reusing material in road repairs. BJ confirmed officers are looking at pilots.

Discussion around solar farms and the Cadw's stance on solar panels on listed buildings. GK asked whether smaller sized solar farms could be an option. TB confirmed that the Feed in Tariff incentive had now come to an end which has made it more difficult to deploy a viable scheme.

Discussion around use of power down automatic switch off software for reducing electric use in offices. HVE confirmed this was being looked at for County Hall. Ysgol Brynhyfryd can already installed such a software with good results.

Discussion around ash die back and the need to sufficiently replace any trees that are felled. BF suggestion for the Council to produce communication and guidance to the public on how to identify ash die back in their gardens/community areas and what to do about it.

Discussion around the value of road side areas for carbon sequestration and biodiversity improvement. HVE/JW confirmed road side green spaces/ verges are part of the land holding mix in improving species diversity over next 9 years.

Discussion around ensuring any new Council owned building is low carbon in operation. HVE confirmed this is an active consideration in the developing 21st Century Schools Band B programme of projects

Discussion around the number of electric vehicles in the Council owned fleet. HVE confirmed less than 10 are electric. Work progressing to increase EV charging

ACTIONS:

- **HVE-** send project manager for the Ash Die Back Project groups suggestion for the Council to produce communication and guidance to the public on how to identify ash die back in their gardens/community areas and what to do about it.

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infrastructure in the Council and thus support more cars and small vans to transition to electric. The Council has introduced an “EV first” fleet procurement policy.

Timeline for rest of 2020/21

HVE took the group through key milestones for the rest of 2020/21 including:

- October = drafting of strategy and action plan document and preparation for public consultation
- November = Public consultation on the draft climate and ecological change strategy and action plan
- December = Carbon Literacy Training for Member and key officers commence
- January = Seeking approval/adoption of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan at Cabinet/Full Council
- February and March = Preparing for project delivery 2021/22 including external funding bids. Developing and Implementing any process/policy changes required.

4. DCC’s Net Carbon Zero Baseline and Pathways to 2030

HVE presented to the group DCC’s net carbon zero baseline. This has been calculated following Welsh Government Greenhouse Gas Reporting guidelines.

18,915 tonnes of carbon was emitted by the Council in 2019/20 from the following sources:

- Buildings
- Waste
- Fleet
- Staff Commuting
- Street Lighting
- Business Travel

Plus 22,710 tonnes of carbon was emitted from the Council’s supply chain.

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2,417 tonnes of carbon was absorbed by the land owned and operated by the Council in 2019/20 from the following land use:

- Grassland
- Forestland / Woodland

HVE presented to the group the proposed aims on carbon reduction and the increase in carbon sequestration for DCC which will form part of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan.

1. It is proposed DCC aims to reduce its emissions from the following sources by 50% by 31st March 2030 to 9,440 tonnes per annum.
 - Buildings
 - Waste
 - Fleet
 - Staff Commuting
 - Street Lighting
 - Business Travel
2. It is proposed DCC aims to increase its carbon absorption by 390% by 31st March 2030 to 9,440 tonnes per annum.

If the Council is successful on the achieving 1 and 2 above, total carbon emissions will be equal to the total carbon absorbed per annum by 31st March 2030.

In addition, it is proposed DCC aims to reduce the carbon emissions from its supply chain by 35% by 31st March 2030.

Discussion around budgets to progress work. JG confirmed budget setting process had commenced and work continues.

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Discussion around Covid 19 and impact of that on Council's carbon footprint. BF suggested potential impacts could be less travel, people shopping locally, a more local supply chain. JG confirmed 'new ways of working' was a theme in the Council's Covid 19 Recovery plans.

HS raised Natural Resource Wales new Blue Carbon report which highlights the carbon absorption benefit of the sea.

HR raised the opportunity for the Council to develop and manage land to achieve its optimal carbon storage capacity.

ACTIONS

- **HVE-** to continue to draft the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan and present draft document at Octobers working group meeting

5. Plans for continued engagement with the public

LWJ took group through the plans for continued public engagement on the Climate and Ecological Change agenda, including an update on webpages on the Council website, an update on setting up a climate and ecological change sub group of Y Panel and outline draft plans for the public consultation on the draft strategy and action plan.

Website

The new corporate website went live in mid-September and we can now progress this action to create a set of climate and ecological change webpages.

The short URL will be www.denbighshire.gov.uk/climatechange.

We hope to launch the new set of webpages during Wales Climate Week, week commencing 2nd November.

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Climate and Ecological Change sub group of Y Panel

As previously reported, it was agreed to progress the option of creating a sub group of the Council's Y Panel on the Council's County Conversation portal and run discussion forums on the County Conversation portal for the public to engage with the Council and each other on that topic to share learning via the messaging platform.

The intention is to run a discussion forum topic every 6 weeks.

We hope to launch the first discussion forum in Wales Climate Week, week commencing 2nd November.

Plan for Public Consultation on draft DCC's Climate & Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan

It is intended that the draft Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan goes out to public consultation for 21 days during November/December.

In light of COVID-19, the following is proposed in terms of the methods of consultation:

- Online survey via County Conversation portal.
- 1 public evening meeting- if there is provision for meetings to be held virtually.
- Presentations at School Council and Youth Council/Parliament meetings- if there is provision for meetings to be held virtually.
- Distribution of youth friendly consultation information to schools.

Discussion around information and resources for schools about climate change. HVE suggested this is something the Council can build on over time on the website.

ACTIONS

- **LWJ / HVE-** to continue with plans for website, discussion forum and public consultation.

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6. Forward work programme and next meetings

HVE took group through the proposed forward work programme/agenda items.

Discussion around inviting representatives from Welsh Government to the next meeting. Group agreed.

Discussion around building into the forward plan a themed meeting around Land Use before end of financial year with the possibility of inviting Natural Resource Wales. Group agreed.

ACTIONS

- **HVE-** to invite representatives from Welsh Government to the October meeting.
- **HVE-** to make changes to forward work programme and invite relevant additional officers to future meetings accordingly.

Month	Proposed items for discussion
21 st October	<p><u>Theme: Pre consultation draft of Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the draft Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan • Planning for public consultation
10 th November	<p><u>Theme: Travel</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our own fleet • Business miles • Staff commute

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Month	Proposed items for discussion
17 th December	<p><u>Theme: Post consultation draft of Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on feedback received in the public consultation • Shaping final Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan
14 th January	<p><u>Theme: Behaviour change</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and behaviour change amongst staff and councillors • Reflection on the Carbon Literacy training
9 th February	<p><u>Theme: Land Use</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on Council's consideration of Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan • Land Use for the benefit of carbon sequestration and ecological improvement • Learning from Natural Resource Wales
9 th March	<p><u>Theme: Closing the group and celebrating success</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on the groups journey since the emergency declaration • Plans for governance and continued scrutiny of progress on this agenda moving forward. • Lessons learned and next steps for the Council

7. AOB

None.