

Notes of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group meeting

Date	21 / 10 / 2020
Time	11.00 - 12.30
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); Cllr Joe Welch (JW); Cllr Tony Thomas (TT)
Apologies	Judith Greenhalgh (JG), Joel Walley (JW), Nicola Kneale (NK)
In attendance	Supporting Officers: Graham Boase (GB), Helen Vaughan-Evans (HVE), Tom Booty (TB); Howard Sutcliffe (HS); Liz Wilcox-Jones (LWJ); Andrew Cutts (AC); Rhys Horan (RH); Rhiannon Phillips (RP) Member Observers: Cllr Martyn Holland (MH); Merfyn Parry (MP), Meirick Lloyd Davies (MLD)

1. Welcome and apologies

Chair GT welcomed all to the meeting and noted apologies.

2. Minutes and actions from the last meeting

Minutes of last meeting agreed as accurate.

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

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ACTION	UPDATE
<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>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Council approved to make the changes on 13th October to Council Constitution “have regard for tackling climate and ecological change” in decision making. • Supporting documents being altered-ready to launch during November • Briefing for Members and Briefing for Officers being prepared by HVE and Gary Williams
<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>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HVE has presented at all MAG meetings during September and October.
<p>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.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On forward plan for November.
<p>HVE - send project manager for the Ash Die Back Project groups suggestion for</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p>

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ACTION	UPDATE
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email sent to Tony Ward and Andrew Cutts. • Guidance document being created by North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent which can then be adjusted for Denbighshire County Council purposes and added to our website
<p>HVE - to continue to draft the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan and present draft document at Octobers working group meeting</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-consultation working draft completed and on agenda for working group feedback
<p>LWJ / HVE - to continue with plans for website, discussion forum and public consultation.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update being provided during this meeting
<p>HVE - to invite representatives from Welsh Government to the October meeting.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p>
<p>HVE - to make changes to forward work programme and invite relevant additional officers to future meetings accordingly.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p>

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Matters arising

- HS – raised concern around North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent tree felling along A55. Queried what is being done to mitigate the loss of these trees, particularly the large, mature trees. Group agreed that a letter should be sent to North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent.
- TW – added there is now a collaboration with Conwy CBC and established project board regarding the Ash dieback project. Firstly, need to jointly agree a policy for the project e.g. replanting ratios for the council to then agree or otherwise.
- GK – queried if there were course notes available from the CAT training. BJ/GT highlight key points but agreed to provide a further report next meeting.
- AR – requested further information about the school council presentation and asked to ensure consultation communication was distributed as widely as possible to schools and our young residents.
- AR – queried if there was a timetable to when vehicles will be obsolete and replaced by electric vehicles. TW – stated there will be legislative deadlines for this, but our timescales will depend on technological improvements and available funding. We have an electric first policy in fleet already.

ACTIONS:

HS / LWJ– Draft letter for Cllr Tony Thomas and Cllr Graham Timm’s review to the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent asking what they are doing to mitigate the loss of trees (particularly mature trees) once felled along the A55. Letter to be sent from this working group under GT name and from the AONB under TT name.

HVE / GT / BJ / TT – Provide highlights / key elements learnt from CAT training for discussion at next meeting.

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3. Verbal Report by Rhys Horan and Rhiannon Phillips from Welsh Government

GB – Introduced Rhys and Rhiannon who joined as representatives from Welsh Government:

Rhys Horan (RH) presented a series of slides to the group. Key messages summarised below:

1. Challenge and Opportunity

- Decarbonisation – Heating and transport are two very difficult areas. Requires action across industry.
- The North Wales Growth Deal Low Carbon Programme presents one such opportunity to take advantage of this transition to low carbon economy.

2. Innovation and the known

- Innovation will play a key role in the transition to a low carbon economy. Alongside, known and emerging technologies (e.g. heat pumps, EVs)
- Heating will be a major challenge and with 74% of homes in Denbighshire connected to mains gas. From 2025, no new gas connections will be possible.

3. Positive achievements

- Need to recognise the significant amount of good work done and underway at DCC e.g. EV charging points, refuse vehicle trials, street lighting, 21st Century Schools Band A.
- Energy service are currently supporting fleet review.

4. Decarbonising the Supply chain

- Whilst we look at our own internal processes/model of delivery – we will need others to look at theirs. Support them to be low carbon.
- Local and shorter supply chains

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5. Supporting local people to play a part

- Take people with us
- Smart meters – this is a key piece of the smart grid jigsaw. Having real time data on consumption and demand is essential for things such as smart charging and for time of use tariffs.
- Potential to group buy solar panels – Solar Together joint procurement in London

6. Welsh Government Energy Services (WGES) Annual Report 2019-20

- WGES annual report can be read here: <https://gov.wales/energy-service-annual-report-2019-to-2020>
- WGES is consortium of Energy Saving Trust, Carbon Trust and Local Partnerships.

7. Summary

- North Wales Economic Ambition Board a catalyst in North Wales for next 10-15 years- huge economic growth potential which can be in the green low carbon sector
- WGES can help you with your ambitions.

Rhiannon Phillips (RP) gave a verbal report to the group. Key messages summarised below:

1. Wales Climate Week

- Online conference. WG are running a series of events online.
- Nov 2nd to 6th.

2. Committee on Climate Change

- Expecting latest advice from Committee on Climate Change in December.
- Will provide information about carbon budget for Wales for 2026-2030 and help to set interim targets for 2030 for 2040 in order for Wales to achieve 95% reductions by 2050.

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3. COP 26- Glasgow

- Being held in Glasgow in November 2021.
- Working to develop the next iteration of Wales 'Prosperity for All- Low carbon delivery plan' in time for COP 26.
- A decarbonisation group will be set up to include Local Authority representatives to inform drafting of the new delivery plan. The group will facilitate joint commitments, a support tool and coordinate collective action.
- Workstreams will include supply chain, building, travel and land use.

4. Monitoring progress

- Apologised for the delay in releasing the new Greenhouse Gas Reporting methodology in April. This was due to Covid and the desire not to place an extra burden on authorities at such a time. Further technical input is also required. It will be made available for those who need it and published at a later date.

5. Transport and EV strategies

- Welsh Government consulting on draft Transport strategy and draft EV strategy for Wales in November.

6. Procurement

- Welsh Government Procurement department are working on how the new Greenhouse Gas reporting regime can reflect changes in policy into supply chain emissions data collection
- WLGA procurement group also helping with this.

7. Big Lottery Community Woodland Fund

- Funding available for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

8. Net Carbon Zero by 2030- Welsh Public Sector target

- Non statutory, not legislative.
- For the Welsh Public Sector as a whole, as a collective

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- Differing levels of opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and increase carbon sequestration in different public sector organisations.
- It's about all doing as much as we can to reduce carbon emissions and increase carbon sequestration.

Questions and answer session with RH and RP

GK – raised a query regarding issues re smart meters and switching suppliers. RH confirmed that the more up to date meters have less issues.

GK- is there any plans for establishing good train links from North to South. RP confirmed the draft travel strategy consultation is an opportunity for the Council to express its hopes and requirements around this.

Discussion on financial pressures on LA's. Suggestion to have a dialogue on what the funding pressures are and being specific on what we want any money for. Suggestion that the Partnership Council could be the forum to communicate what LA's need money for.

Question on procurement and how to drive right behaviours. Suggestion that the criteria around social value and around carbon in procurement can be used to drive the right behaviour.

Question on Planning- how can carbon be integrated into planning system. Suggestion that this needs to be done carefully so to avoid unintended consequences.

HS – queried if WG were looking at the maturity and not just prevalence of habitats when addressing carbon sequestration. Rhiannon stated WG were looking at this and recognised that carbon sequestration in land use was still a developing area for the greenhouse gas reporting regime.

RP urged the group to present well thought out, well-argued projects which met Welsh Government funding criteria. Transport department in WG have a high capital and revenue funding each year. Suggestion to develop schemes to then be ready to take advantage of

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any funding opportunities (“shovel ready”). Recognition though that it is a lot work to get schemes shovel ready.

BJ – suggestion for a North Wales Climate Change Conference. So collaborative idea can be devised.

GK – stressed it’s not just the AONB we need to be mindful of for carbon sequestration – Denbigh moors and Hiraethog etc. significant also – peat is important.

AR – raised North Wales Growth Deal / North Wales Economic Ambition Board and why the lagoon could not be realised with the Growth Deal money. GB responded that it could still be delivered by EAB but not using the growth deal money.

HS – raised the importance of the salt marsh habitat within Wales’ seas and being careful of the impact of wind farms and tidal lagoons on this habitat that absorbs carbon and represents a crucial habitat for ecology.

RP offered to keep in touch and connect us where we can with key contacts within Welsh Government.

GT thanks RP and RH for their time and contribution.

ACTIONS:

- **RH** – send HVE the WGES Annual Report to share with the group.
- **RP** – send HVE information regarding WG Climate week newsletter and event registration link to share with the group.
- **RP** – to provide contact details for the land use lead at Welsh Government for DCC representatives to have a meeting.
- **HS** – send Natural Resource Wales Blue Carbon report to the group.

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4. Review of Pre-Consultation Working Draft document – DCC’s Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021-22 – 2029/30)

HVE took the group through the draft document and requested feedback from the group.

Group expressed thanks to HVE for the hard work put in and general feedback for the document was positive.

Suggestions for improvements included:

- BF- recommended the language could be simplified and more information could be communicated in picture form to make it easier to understand. It was suggested an easy read/youth friendly document and infographic might be useful along side the full version.
- AR- requested the document/consultation info is sent to Chair of Governors of each school for all Denbighshire schools, not just secondary. Group agreed it was vital to engage with schools and the youth on this topic.
- HS- Consider ‘Climate Change and Nature Recovery Strategy’ as the name for the document
- GT- add being responsive and flexible to developments in technology which may enable us to go further on reducing carbon. Add an action around engaging schools. Add an action around working with producers and land owners to help them to reduce carbon and improve biodiversity.
- BJ- add an action around working with business around supply chain emissions. Waste and Recycling Green Awards for schools that is to be held annually as part of the New Waste Model and Depot project may be a good link in with engagement with schools more widely on this agenda.
- GT, BJ and TT to come along to School/Youth Council meeting on 10th November.

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ACTIONS

- **HVE**- make changes to the strategy document in light of feedback.
- **HVE / LWJ** - to produce youth friending, easy read and infographic versions of the strategy working with colleagues/external providers.
- **HVE** – to send strategy/consultation info to all Chair of Governors.
- **LWJ** – add GT, BJ and TT to School/Youth Council meeting liaising with the meeting organiser.
- **LWJ** – to request a longer slot at School/Youth Council meeting.

5. Public consultation and Communication

HVE took group through plan for public consultation of the strategy document.

LWJ took group through continued work on the webpages on the Council website, setting up the discussion forum and planned comms for Wales Climate week and the consultation period.

Website

The new web pages will be launched w/c Nov 2nd.

Wales Climate Change week

We will be doing 5 days of communications to staff via Denbighshire Today and to the public on social media.

Positive messages with calls to action and energy saving advice for staff.

Discussion forum

The intention is to launch the discussion forum w/c Nov 16th and run a different topic for the public to get involved in every 6 weeks.

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The first topic will be entitled 'Climate Change and You' to engage a general discussion to launch with.

7. Forward work programme and next meetings

It was suggested for the meeting to be extended to 2 hours.

8. AOB

Brief discussion on single use plastics.