

<b>Report to</b>	Council
<b>Date of meeting</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> February
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Cllr Brian Jones & Cllr Tony Thomas / Judith Greenhalgh
<b>Report author</b>	Helen Vaughan-Evans
<b>Title</b>	<b>Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021-2029)</b>

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

- 1.1. This report is about the Denbighshire County Council's (DCC) Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021/22 – 2029/30).

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

- 2.1. To present the final strategy document for Council to decide on whether to adopt it.

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

- 3.1 That Council approve to adopt the Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021/22 – 2029/30).
- 3.2 That Council confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix A) as part of its consideration.

## **4. Report details**

- 4.1. The Council declared a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency on 9th July 2019 which contained a set of actions for DCC including the goal for the Council to become net carbon zero by 2030 at the latest, to enhance biodiversity in Denbighshire and to draw up a clear plan to achieve this.

- 4.2. In 2019, the Welsh Government (WG) published Wales' Low Carbon Delivery Plan "Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales" which set the ambition for the public sector in Wales to be net carbon zero by 2030. The Council will be required to participate in WG new Greenhouse Gas Reporting Regime baselining, monitoring and reporting progress towards carbon neutrality (policy 20) annually.
- 4.3. The DCC Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (Appendix B) delivers upon the scope of the Council's Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Declaration and what is required of the Council under WG's new Greenhouse Gas Reporting Regime.
- 4.4. The Strategy is all about the Council achieving Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030. The document explains what we mean by those two goals, how the Council is currently performing on both, what we hope 2030 will look like for the Council having achieved our goals and the changes and actions we hope to deliver over the next 9 years, subject to the securing of the necessary funds. Infographics summarising the two 2030 goals can be seen in Appendix C.
- 4.5. This work has been guided by the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Working Group which was set up as part of the emergency declaration. This group has been made up of two representatives from each political party represented in the Council including the two Lead Members for climate and ecological change.
- 4.6. If approved, progress in achieving the goals set out in the Strategy will be monitored by the Corporate Plan Board. Compliance and progress will be scrutinised by Internal Audit and Scrutiny Committees at the discretion of the Chief Internal Auditor and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs. A paper will be taken to Council each year highlighting progress made referring back to the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration. The strategy will be reviewed and refreshed every 3 years (2024 and 2027).

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

- 5.1 The Strategy will make a direct contribution to the current Environment Priority within the Corporate Plan 2017-2022 (specifically 15% carbon reduction target and planting 18,000 more trees by 2022).
- 5.2 It represents the delivery document for the Council achieving its aim of becoming Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030 in response to the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency declared by the Council in 2019.
- 5.3 The Strategy will make our contribution to the Welsh Government policy for the public sector to be carbon neutral by 2030, for Wales to meet its legally binding target of reducing emissions by at least 95% by 2050 and supports the Councils statutory duty under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to “seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity”.

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

- 6.1 Some of changes and actions set out in the Strategy will require capital investment, others revenue funding, and some delivered at no additional cost. Many of the changes and actions will save the Council money over the long time. To deliver this strategy over the next 3 years we think it will cost in the region of £9 million pounds to deliver the projects needed to achieve all that we'd like. We suspect we will need to invest a similar figure in future years leading up to 2030. All interventions will be individually appraised- financially, via capital business cases and through revenue budget plans and processes, and for wellbeing and sustainability alignment, via the established wellbeing impact assessment process.
- 6.2 The council will not have to provide all of this money itself. We expect that grants from the Welsh Government, National Government and supporting bodies will be available to help fund the planned work over the 9 years.
- 6.3 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. Alignment of service business plans, performance management, regulatory

mechanisms and decision making to the Climate and Ecological Change ambitions will support delivery. This is aided by the Council approval to amend Section 13.2 of the Council's Constitution- Principals of Decision Making in October 2020 so that all decisions of the Council will have regard to tackling climate and ecological change.

## **7 What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

7.1 The DCC's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan in its very nature of combating climate and ecological change has protecting and improving the well-being of generations now and in the future at its heart. See Appendix A for full report.

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

8.1 DCC ran an engagement period in January and February 2020 asking for the public's feedback on the Council's proposed net carbon zero and ecologically positive goals and for any ideas on how the Council can achieve them by 2030. The public engagement response summary report is publically available [here](#).

8.2 Building on the public's ideas officers worked throughout 2020 with Councillors and Officers from across the Council to develop the Strategy, including holding workshops with all the service areas and key officers, presentations to Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team and presentations at all Member Area Groups.

8.3 In November and December 2020 the Council ran a public consultation on the draft document and the feedback received used to shape the Council's final Strategy. The consultation feedback summary report is publically available [here](#).

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

9.1 The financial implications are clearly set out in Section 6. The approved Budget for 2021/22 includes investment of £0.389m base budget. The investment set out in this report will require an annual increase in the budget which will be taken through the annual budget process. It is important that external sources of funding are maximised in order to help lower the impact on the Council's finances. As stated in Section 6 it's

important that individual projects are taken through the usual approval processes (Strategic Investment Group etc.).

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

10.1 Notable risks are included in Appendix D.

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

11.1 Section 2, Local Government Act 2000 - the power to do anything which DCC consider is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area.

11.2 Section 111, Local Government Act 1972- the power to do anything which is conducive to, or calculated to facilitate, the discharge of the Council's functions.

## Appendix A- Wellbeing Impact Assessment

*See separate PDF*

## Appendix B- Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021-2030)

*See separate PDF*

## Appendix C- Infographics summarising Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive Council by 2030 Goals

*See separate PDF*

## Appendix D – Notable Risks

RISK	DESCRIPTION	MITIGATION ACTION
Affordability of the Council being able to achieve its net carbon zero and ecologically positive goals.	There is a risk that the Council is unable to commit or attract sufficient resource (revenue and capital) to coordinate the programme, deliver net carbon zero and ecologically positive projects and deliver other projects in an enhanced eco way meaning funding bids are not submitted, opportunities not maximised, actions are not delivered and benefits are not realised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proactively seeking external finance with Welsh Government and Whitehall Departments using the strategy and action plan as our narrative.</li><li>• Submitting strong and coordinated external funding bids, working collaboratively across the region as well as across internal DCC departments.</li><li>• Early input into the Budget Board on calls on revenue and capital for the following financial year.</li><li>• Ongoing dialogue with Section 151 officer in relation to longer financial plans via the Medium Term Financial Plan.</li><li>• Carbon Literacy Training and ongoing support to officers to factor in eco enhancement from inception stage of projects,</li></ul>

RISK	DESCRIPTION	MITIGATION ACTION
		<p>building in sufficient provision within external funding bids.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing whole life costing into business case process to capture fully the long term costs and benefits of schemes.</li> <li>• Maximising on the delivery of the many projects which save both money and carbon annually for the Council.</li> <li>• Maximising on the delivery of projects which deliver upon COVID-19 recovery requirements and carbon saving for the Council.</li> </ul>
<p>Being responsive to new opportunities to reduce carbon.</p>	<p>There is a risk that new opportunities may arise between now and 2030 that we need to respond to that will enable us to go further on reducing our carbon emissions, for example the introduction of a readily accessible new technology or a major development in ways to generate energy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horizon scan and keep abreast of developments within the climate and energy sectors.</li> <li>• Annual review paper to Full Council stating any major changes impacting the strategy.</li> <li>• Formally review and refresh the strategy document every 3 years up until 2030 (2023/24 and 2026/27).</li> </ul>
<p>Meeting Public Expectation.</p>	<p>There is a risk of not meeting public expectation on this agenda and the democratic and reputational damage that could cause.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to engage with the public proactively, constructively and sensitively on this agenda being very clear on the scope and scale of the Council's targets.</li> <li>• Through working with the Public Service Board (PSB) and community development partners, support the public in contributing personally to this agenda at a community level.</li> <li>• Celebrating the Council's existing and continued success in this agenda via press releases/social media and ensuring the public are</li> </ul>

<b>RISK</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MITIGATION ACTION</b>
		aware of the range of work the Council are undertaking.