

## Notes of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group meeting

<b>Date</b>	09 / 03 / 2021
<b>Time</b>	10.00 - 11.30
<b>Location</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Present</b>	Cllr Bobby Feeley (BF); Cllr Barry Mellor (BM); Cllr Brian Jones (BJ); Cllr Graham Timms (GT); Cllr Joe Welch (CJW); Cllr Tony Thomas (TT); Cllr Arwel Roberts (AR); Cllr Gwyneth Kensler (GK)
<b>Apologies</b>	Judith Greenhalgh (JG); Nicola Kneale (NK);
<b>In attendance</b>	<p>Supporting Officers: Helen Vaughan-Evans (HVE); Liz Wilcox-Jones (LWJ); Tom Booty (TB); Howard Sutcliffe (HS); Andrew Cutts (AC); Heidi Barton-Price (HBP); Joel Walley (JW); Tony Ward (TW); Alan Smith (AS)</p> <p>Councillor Observers: Cllr Ellie Chard (EC), Cllr Ann Jones (AJ), Cllr Meirick Ll. Davies (MD)</p>

### 1. Welcome and apologies

Chair GT welcomed all to the meeting and noted apologies.

GT congratulated the team for the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy being passed and the achievement in such a short space of time.

### 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>RP – to provide contact details for the land use lead at Welsh Government for DCC representatives to have a meeting.</p>	<p>SUPERCEDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HVE has a Woodland creation / National Forest catch-up with Welsh Government and WLGA colleagues end of March</li> </ul>
<p>HVE – to make changes to the letter to Lesley Griffith AM and send to BJ for review.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated version sent to BJ following Council adoption of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy</li> </ul>
<p>GT- As the Chair of the working group, to suggest to Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Committee the opportunity for a written report from School Catering to go to Scrutiny in September/October 2021 regarding progress made on low carbon and reduction of single use plastics</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be raised at 11<sup>th</sup> March Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group meeting</li> </ul>
<p>HVE - to provide a list of Councillors still to book on Carbon Literacy training to councillors of this working group for them to encourage up take.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26 out of 46 Councillors (57%)</li> </ul>
<p>LWJ- promotion of the remaining places to all staff from January 28th.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of places available booked</li> <li>• <i>“best uptake by far for a local authority, congratulations”</i> (feedback from APSE Trainer)</li> </ul>

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LWJ- Devise a behaviour change and communications plan for 2021/22.	ONGOING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft being discussed with Corporate Communications mid-March</li> </ul>
GT – work with Rhian Evans and Steve Price on possible options for the future of the working group after March. Report back to the group.	COMPLETED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On agenda today</li> <li>Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group meeting being held on 11th March</li> </ul>
HVE - add future of working group to agenda for March's meeting.	COMPLETED
HS/LWJ- to respond to the NMWTRA/WG letter regarding tree felling on the A5/A494.	ONGOING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response drafted, to be sent this week</li> </ul>
HVE – to add the ash die project as a potential agenda item for a future meeting in 2021/22, depending on future of group, as suggested by TW.	ONGOING
TB – to bring further information re the land acquisition and disposal matrix to next meeting (March).	COMPLETED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verbal update to be provided</li> </ul>

## Matters arising

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BJ – Helen has sent draft Lesley Griffiths AM letter to Brian, who has agreed it should be sent.

AR – provided positive feedback of the Carbon Literacy course. Enquired for further information to be provided on take up statistics e.g. percentage of Councillors to Staff who have undertaken the training. HVE – summarized the training uptake and who attended. Encouraged Members to complete their follow on action of completing their carbon literacy action plans after attending the course so they can become Carbon Literate Accredited.

TB – recapped the group on what was discussed last session regarding land acquisition for increasing carbon sequestration and species richness purposes. Officer group convened to discuss a land purchase/disposal plan, consisting of a mix of Land asset team, Climate Change and Countryside officers. Development of a matrix tool to help decide on which sites we would like to acquire as well as those we may wish to hold onto which would have ordinarily been disposed of.

AR – asked if schools were within scope. TB confirmed schools were but added it is large areas we really need and clustered planting so that tree cover covered at least 20% of the land area.

GT – asked for predications for 20 years' time on whether our landscape will be changed because of this? TB - Depends on funding. 20 years in a tree's life is quite short but would hope to see a significant change in the long term. JW- nature can recover very quickly. Even if we don't have fully established woodland by that point, we would hope to see a change quickly in the species recovery. Evidence of this is already present within the county after a short period of time. HS – land adjacent to other land we own is helpful and felt accessibility should also be considered along with how the public can benefit. HVE – to get to 9440 tonnes of carbon sequestration by 2030 we estimate the Council will need an additional 1,294 hectares of land for Forestland in its ownership and management by 2030. This equates to about 1.5% of County Area of Denbighshire and equivalent to about 12% of current area of Clocaenog Forest. Figures are estimates but provided to give a scale of the goal. We aren't working alone e.g. WG working with NRW in the West of the county.

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AD – a lot of land in Rhuddlan suitable for tree planting but Cadw have restrictions. Would welcome tree planting particularly due to loss because of flooding. HW- there are issues due to loss of trees in that area but this is largely on private land. Reminder that tree planting needs to be on DCC owned and operated land to contribute to our Net Carbon Zero Council goal and we need to think larger scale.

**ACTIONS:**

- **BJ-** to send letter to Lesley Griffiths AM via email.
- **LWJ-** to provide further statistics on Carbon Literacy training attendance once all of the course dates completed.

### 3. Theme: Reflecting on progress and looking ahead

Helen took the group through the achievements so far on this agenda since declaring Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.

Progress since the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency declaration in July 2019.

Statement in Emergency Declaration	Progress made 2019/20 and 2020/21
Immediately declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declaration made in July 2019.</li> <li>• £200k budget for 2020/21 to enable response to emergency declaration work to progress</li> <li>• Change in the Council’s constitution for decision making to have regard to tackling climate and ecological change in October 2020.</li> </ul>

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Statement in Emergency Declaration	Progress made 2019/20 and 2020/21
<p>Commit to making the authority net carbon zero by 2030 at the latest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate and Ecological Change Strategy 2021/22-2029/30 adopted in February 2021 including Net Carbon Zero Council by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2030 target.</li> <li>• £389k budget for 2021/22 to employ permanent staff and leverage up to £2.8m capital for delivering on targets.</li> </ul>
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Working Group set up- first meeting October 2020, met monthly (generally).</li> <li>• Climate and Ecological Change Strategy 2021/22-2029/30 adopted in February 2021 including Ecologically Positive Council by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2030 target.</li> </ul>
<p>Call on the Welsh Government and UK Government to provide assistance and resources to enable us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance biodiversity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submitted consultation responses to numerous Welsh Government carbon related plans/strategies.</li> <li>• Representation at the Wales wide Local Government Decarbonisation Strategy Panel.</li> </ul>
<p>Work with partners across the public, private and third sector to help solve this climate and ecological emergency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions to the Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board Environmental Resilience Workstream.</li> </ul>

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Statement in Emergency Declaration	Progress made 2019/20 and 2020/21
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions to North Wales Public Sector Decarbonisation officer group.</li> <li>• 2 x public engagement/consultations, Jan/Feb 2020 and Nov/Dec 2020.</li> <li>• Regular communications to the public via press releases, website, green mailing list emails and Council run Discussion Forums.</li> <li>• Engagement and dialogue with third sector umbrella organisation Together Creating Communities (TCC).</li> <li>• Leaders call on North Wales Economic Ambition Board to consider climate and ecological change in their activities for growth in the region.</li> </ul>

## £200k Climate Emergency enabling budget 2020/21

HVE took the group through key areas of spend which has been made possible through the one off Climate Emergency budget for 2020/21, including employment of staff, development of projects to business case stage, introduction of Energy and Carbon Management System for monitoring and targeting reduction in carbon from buildings, match funded to leverage external grants and roll out of Carbon Literacy for Local Government training.

## Governance and continued scrutiny of progress on this agenda moving forward.

Discussion around options for monitoring, challenging and supporting progress in delivering Climate and Ecological Change Strategy.

GT explained options paper being discussed at Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting in March. Issue with capacity in Democratic Services. Climate Change Programme Office have offered to support. Monthly perhaps too frequent considering officer capacity.

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General support for the idea to continue with a cross party political working group for 2021/22, year 1 of strategy delivery, 3 meetings during the year.

BJ- Scrutiny Committees a good route to keep an eye on progress.

AS – Don't want to lose the enthusiasm. Important to have more informal ways to keep Members and staff engaged and informed. Discussion around using the Council Briefing sessions.

BF – discussion about the benefit of having a dedicated cabinet portfolio on the climate and ecological change agenda when the new Council is formed after May 2022 local elections.

Looking ahead to 2021/22 and Year 1 of Strategy delivery.

HVE took the group through the projects/activities planned for 2021/22 under the following work streams: Buildings, Fleet Travel, Non-Fleet Travel, Waste, Supply Chain, Land Use, Biodiversity and Behaviour Change.

GT – big thank you to all the people involved in the work and the cabinet, officer members and all involved behind the scenes supporting this political working group.

HVE – thanked the group and all officers involved also. Thanked Judith for her support as Programme Sponsor.

## **ACTIONS:**

**GT/BJ** – to discuss future of this working group for 2021/22 prior to the March Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting.

## **4. Any other business**

No other business relayed.