

Notes of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group meeting

Date	09 / 02 / 2021
Time	10.00 - 11.30
Location	Microsoft Teams
Present	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).
Apologies	Judith Greenhalgh (JG); Nicola Kneale (NK); Cllr Gwyneth Kensler (GK); Cllr Meirick Ll. Davies (MD).
In attendance	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); Eifion Jones NRW (EJ). Councillor Observers: Cllr Ellie Chard (EC); Cllr Alan James (AJ); Cllr Martyn Holland (MH).

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>RP – to provide contact details for the land use lead at Welsh Government for DCC representatives to have a meeting.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HVE has requested and chased on email to RP
<p>HVE – to make changes to the letter to Lesley Griffith AM and send to BJ for review.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p>
<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>
<p>HVE- make all changes agreed to the strategy document in light of public feedback.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy going to Cabinet on 16th February for approval and Council on 23rd February for adoption.
<p>HVE- produce and publish to the public the Consultation Response Report.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published end of January
<p>HVE- to provide information to standing Members of this group for them to email/encourage councillors to book onto training by January 27th .</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p>

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COUNCILLORS OF THIS GROUP – to encourage councillors within your political grouping to sign up for the Carbon Literacy training.	ONGOING
HVE/LWJ- promotion of the remaining places to all staff from January 28 th .	ONGOING
HVE/LWJ- Devise a behaviour change and communications plan for 2021/22.	ONGOING
HVE – to find out if a Flood Management Task and Finish group was being formed and decide which members would be best involved from this group	COMPLETED <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose: To explore potential methods for strengthening communication channels and building effective working relationships between all parties and organisations that have responsibilities for managing flood risk from rivers and watercourses across Denbighshire.• Report to Communities Scrutiny Committee on its work to date by late 2021

Matters arising

Working group

Discussion had around the future of the working group next financial year. Steve Price/Rhian Evans/Cllr Graham Timms to present a report at March's Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group (11th March) with possible options for the way forward for monitoring/challenging/supporting progress in delivering the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy. GT to talk this group through options being considered at March (9th) meeting.

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BM agreed that the climate and ecological change agenda is a long journey and stopping these meetings at the end of March doesn't seem right.

BF – queried how members will follow and stay involved with the agenda if there is no working group? GT – stated that if Strategy approved on the 23rd February then Strategy delivery will be overseen by the Corporate Plan Board.

BJ emphasised that the right people need to be on the board.

Carbon literacy training

Praise for the Carbon Literacy for Local Government training from those already attended and it was urged all Councillors to book on if not already done so.

Welsh Government has set out its legal commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, following Committee for Climate Change 6th Carbon Budget Advice

Council meeting in January secured of budget for Net Carbon Zero delivery 2021/22, including budget for staff (1x Programme Manager, 2 x Project Manager, 1 x EV Fleet Officer) and revenue to fund the borrowing for capital projects. Projects being delivered in following workstreams Buildings, Fleet Travel, Non-Fleet Travel, Waste and Land Use.

Response from North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent / Welsh Government (NMWTRA/WG)

Response from NMWTRA/WG regarding the tree felling on the A5 and A494 was discussed.

Group discussed NMWTRA/WG replanting plans and whether there are any synergies with our carbon sequestration plans. Would be good to know where they are planning to replant, what and when.

Discussion around Ash Die Back. TW suggested the ash die back project could come to this group as a future agenda action.

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AC informed the group work was being carried out to develop a dataset to keep track of the county's live assets.

ACTIONS:

- **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.
- **HVE** - add future of working group to agenda for March's meeting.
- **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.
- **HS/LWJ**- to respond to the NMWTRA/WG letter regarding tree felling on the A5/A494.
- **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.

3. Theme: Land Use for the benefit of carbon sequestration and ecological improvement

Presentation and Q&A by Eifion Jones (Specialist adviser, woodland creation), NRW.

Learning about Nature Resource Wales (NRW) Woodland Creation Programme and how to measure carbon absorption impact at a project level.

Eifion Jones from NRW took the group through the NRW woodland Creation programme.

Talked about: The right tree, right place, right reasons.

8 strands to consider:

- Alternative funding
- Regulation review
- Extending the WG woodland estate – buying land/long term lease
- Centenary and Beacon trees – small scale

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- Plant! – planting a tree for every child in Wales
- Glastir verification service – right tree, right place
- National Forest – WG committed to developing the policy
- Urban trees and Green infrastructure

3 important factors:

- Land
- People (to plant the trees)
- Investment

When creating new woodland:

- Plan – what and where
- Consult – who – current and future stakeholders
- Engage – how – funding and support

NRW use the CARBINE model for measuring carbon stocks of stands and forests. The right carbon modelling tool must be selected to suit your needs, around 60 available.

Q&A

GT - How much land have NRW acquired? – Approx. 2000 hectare rising to 4000 hectares asap but the aim is to get as much as possible.

BF – Is there any advice on tree planting in gardens and small holdings to help with the carbon sequestration goal? - The Woodland trust have a scheme currently doing that and NRW are working with them on the tree packs. Looking to increase the success of those trees when planted.

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HVE – funding to support the planting of trees? – Woodland Trust provide funding for tree planting up to 3 hectares. It is possible to subscribe to an organisation called 9 Trees whose mission is to plant 9 trees for every person and maintain the trees once planted.

AR –DCC have a varied environment, how do we identify appropriate areas for woodland successfully? - There is a Woodland Opportunity Map which shows where woodland creation is appropriate and where it isn't.

MH – what are we doing to protect woodland that is already existing? - Agree, it is key to maintain what we've got. Great opportunity with the National Forest for Wales and linking up with that. A consultation on the National Forest programme is due to happen in Autumn 2021.

MH- Are we talking to quarry companies to convert these areas into woodland? – these sites are often species rich habitats so would need to check site by site whether tree planting is appropriate in these areas.

HS – Tree Protection Orders - Important to educate land owners that they see trees as an asset as opposed to a problem.

LWJ – planting a tree for every child in Denbighshire? – HS confirmed Garry Davies is leading on a scheme already in Denbighshire called PLANT Project- 18,000 trees by end of March 2022.

Round table discussion on Land Use considerations for DCC in meeting our net carbon zero and ecologically positive Council by 2030 goals- Summary on Denbighshire's position

TB stated to achieve our target of becoming net carbon zero by 2030 we need to sequester a lot more carbon than we do currently.

Following an initial meeting TB and other officers have developed a draft matrix to act as a guide to support decision making on land acquisition and disposal within the county to ensure carbon sequestration and ecological improvement opportunities are maximised.

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Key points being considered are: carbon sequestration potential, biodiversity, mitigate flood risk.

The idea is that the matrix would be used by the group of officers look at potential land and score it to help with site acquisition/disposal decisions.

Ongoing management and responsibility need to be considered. Traditionally land is leased out but this is problematic for this agenda as to count against Net Carbon Zero goal DCC needs to both own and operate the land.

TB happy to expand more at the next meeting (March).

ACTIONS:

- **TB** – to bring further information re the land acquisition and disposal matrix to next meeting (March).

4. Forward work programme and any other business

HVE took the group through the forward work programme.

Agreement that the Theme will be about reflecting on groups journey since the emergency declaration and looking ahead to first year of Strategy delivery.

Month	Proposed items for discussion
9 th March	<p><u>Theme: Reflecting on progress and looking ahead</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflecting on Council's consideration of Climate and Ecological Change Strategy.

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	<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.
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