

MINUTES

MEETING: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP

Date	28 th July 2021
Time	14.00-16.00
Location	Microsoft Teams
Present	Cllr Brian Jones (BJ), Cllr Graham Timms (GT), Cllr Tony Thomas (TT), Cllr Bobby Feeley (BF), Cllr Gwyneth Kensler (GK), Cllr Arwel Roberts (AR), Cllr Barry Mellor (BM)
Apologies	Andrew Cutts, Tony Ward, Nicola Kneale, Joel Walley and Cllr Joe Welch
In attendance	Supporting officers: Helen Vaughan-Evans (HVE), Howard Sutcliffe (HS), Jane Hodgson (JH), Tom Booty (TB), Alan Smith (AS), Liz Wilcox-Jones (LWJ) Councillor Observers: Cllr Ellie Chard (EC), Cllr Meirick Davies (MD)

1. Welcome and apologies

Chair GT welcomed all to the meeting and noted apologies.

Welcomed Jane Hodgson to the Climate Change team who has started in the role as Climate Change Project Manager.

2. Updating Terms of Reference for group

Helen took group through the proposed changes to the groups Terms of Reference.

Discussion about the defined purpose of the group.

Group approved updated Terms of Reference.

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ACTION:

- HVE – to circulate the approved updated terms of reference to Group members and to democratic services.

BJ – important to outline to Members the direction of travel and what the organisation needs to do to deliver on its Climate and Ecological Strategy 2022-2027 – so when handing over to new Council after May 2022 elections there is sound footing and understanding for the Councillors making up the new Council for their 5-year term.

GT – this agenda is of particular interest to Councillors and this group provides a good cross party forum on the agenda.

AS – agree with BJ and GT. Shame to lose support and momentum.

HVE – good place to include recommendation to continue this group into new Council (2022-2027) would be the paper to Full Council required in February 2022.

ACTION:

- HVE – to include recommendation to continue the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Working Group into new Council (2022-2027) in the paper to Full Council (on forward plan for 22nd February 2022)

3. Minutes and actions from last meeting and matters arising

Minutes of last meeting agreed as accurate.

Actions of last meeting on March 9th 2021 reviewed and update provided by HVE. See summary table below.

ACTION	UPDATE
BJ- to send letter to Lesley Griffiths AM via email.	SUPERCEDED

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New letter been drafted to the new Minister and Deputy Minister for Climate Change (Julie James MS and Lee Waters MS) • On agenda for group edit and approval to send
<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"> • Graham to raise this suggestion at next Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Committee (9th September). • Likely Autumn/Winter for discussion (Communities Scrutiny- 29th October)
<p>LWJ- Devise a behaviour change and communications plan for 2021/22.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan now being delivered • Ideas for public event in Autumn on agenda
<p>HS/LWJ- to respond to the NMWTRA/WG letter regarding tree felling on the A5/A494.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response was sent 08.12.20 • Reply received 21.12.20 • <i>NMWTRA will be happy to liaise with Denbighshire County Council and discuss further any other partnership projects and collaboration that facilitates more tree planting in the county</i> • Subsequent meeting was cancelled Mar/Apr 2021.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement meeting yet to be arranged
<p>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.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested on forward plan for November
<p>GT/BJ – to discuss future of this working group for 2021/22 prior to the March Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p>
<p>LWJ- to provide further statistics on Carbon Literacy training attendance once all of the course dates completed.</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 207 learners completed 1-day Carbon Literacy Training • 77 Carbon Action Plans submitted • 61 learners Carbon Literacy accredited • DCC able to apply to become Bronze Carbon Literate organisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3-year accreditation ○ Use of logo and featured in national promotion • 'Introduction to Climate Change' e learn launched end of June, 107 learners completed the course in first 2 weeks of launching- best e learn module performance!

Following Matters Arising discussed

Review of draft letter to Minister and Vice Minister for Climate Change

Edits made to the letter live during the meeting.

GT- important to mention that Council has a plan and has committed resources to its delivery.

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MD –letter to be sent bilingually.

BJ – suggested inclusion of reference to Bronze Carbon Literacy accreditation in the letter. We would be the first Local Authority in Wales to become accredited under the Carbon Literacy Project.

ACTIONS:

- HVE - to mention accreditation achievement and additional indicated amendments in Ministerial letter.
- BJ- to liaise with the Leader in sending the letter to the Ministers.

Verbal report about Scrutiny paper by Head of Highways and Environmental Services on managing grassland for biodiversity

HVE provided a verbal introduction to this matters arising in TW's absence.

Group supportive of the principals involved.

Specific feedback received from BM, AR, GT, GK, TT, BF, MD to consideration by TW to include in the paper and the approach to the extension of the Wildflower Meadow Project in 2022.

Feedback noted by officers and HVE to report back to TW.

HVE clarified councillors were sent a list of all sites for inclusion in 2021 round of the Project in May 2021. Suggested that this is sent by the Project Team earlier in year for 2022 round of the Project. FYI also, now a map of all sites available on the website as well as a webpage with information about the project- <https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/environmental-health/climate-and-ecological-change/wildflower-meadow-project.aspx>.

Group supportive of the Wildflower Meadow Project and look forward to hearing the debate at Scrutiny.

ACTIONS:

- HVE - to include in agenda for next working group meeting a discussion around pesticide use in grounds maintenance and the Councils current policy.
- HVE- to feedback to TW the groups feedback and that group happy for TW to mention working groups support in consultation sector of the report template.
- TW- to draft Scrutiny paper accordingly.

4. Report back on 2020/21 Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive performance indicator performance

HVE took everyone through the annual performance report for the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and the Key Performance Indicators for Net Carbon Zero Council, Supply Chain Emissions and Ecologically Positive Council.

HVE emphasised that 2020/21 was year 0 of strategy delivery and the first year of the strategy is 2021/22.

HVE emphasised that 2020/21 was a year of Covid lockdowns and that carbon emissions may rise in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21 but that they absolutely are targeted to reduce compared to 2019/20 baseline.

Data included in the Council's overall Annual Performance Report which can be read here and presented and approved at Full Council in July-

<https://moderngov.denbighshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MIId=6309&LLL=0>

Summary provided below:

Net Carbon Zero

- 2019/20 baseline has been updated in light of change of scope for waste dictated by Welsh Government GHG Reporting Guidance (baseline lower)
- Total Carbon emitted – reduced by 23% in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20 baseline
- Total Carbon sequestered- reduced by 2% in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20 baseline
- Net Carbon Zero position- sits at 10,277 tonnes in 2020/21 (27% lower than 2019/20 baseline)

Supply Chain Emissions

- Supply chain emissions- reduced by 2.2% in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20 baseline.

Ecologically Positive

- Percentage change in species richness land classification – 0.58% increase in amount of land in highest categories of species richness

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GT – requested whether a mid-year estimate on carbon performance could be reported at working group meeting in the New Year and included in Full Council paper in February. HVE expressed concern as much of the data is annual collection only but would look into what could be done.

AR – queried definition of woodland. The UK Land Inventory definition has been used within Welsh Government GHG Reporting Methodology which is the methodology the Council is following. At least 20% canopy cover provides opportunities to create matrix habitat positive for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. AR suggested a piece of work to assess current tree coverage at schools and potential to increase to be able to define at woodland.

ACTIONS:

- HVE – to look into the possibility of providing forecast statistics for the Programme Key Performance Indicators in February 2022.
- LWJ - Assess the tree canopy coverage at Denbighshire schools on their grounds and opportunities to increase to at least 20%.

5. Review of the recommendations from the Audit Wales Environmental Ambitions Audit Report

Not had full audit findings report back from Audit Wales yet but they have sent us the staff survey results they undertook as part of the audit (505 responses received from staff).

AS took the group verbally through the staff survey findings and that the report indicated:

- we have clear goals and strategy (84% understood the strategy)
- council and staff have great pride in being involved in this (50% understood how it would affect their work)
- staff are pleased something is happening

Areas to focus on for future:

- Increasing understanding on how we are monitoring performance – indicators and measures
- Increasing understanding on how staff can apply the goals within the strategy to their roles
- Sharing further detail on what the Climate and Ecological Change programme involves

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EC- positive that a variety of staff have done the survey – noted she was aware of a school PA who had completed it.

GK – queried the percentage response rate being quite low. Discussion around the impact of Covid response and staff capacity to complete survey.

6. Project delivery during 2021/22 and Proposed Investment Plan for 2022/23

HVE took the group through project delivery for 2021/22 and reminded the group of the budget allocated for 2021/22 by the Council.

- £189k revenue to pay for prudential borrowing (estimated to leverage approximately £2.8m)
- £200k revenue to pay for staff

Projects that are being delivered during 2021/22 include:

BUILDINGS	FLEET TRAVEL	NON FLEET TRAVEL	WASTE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greening Ysgol Dinas Bran • Greening Pavilion Theatre • Greening County Hall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate EV Charging and EV Purchase Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public EV Charging Project • New Ways of Working Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening of Rhyl Tip Reuse Shop

SUPPLY CHAIN	LAND USE- SEQUESTRATION	LAND USE- BIODIVERSITY	BEHAVIOUR CHANGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Carbon Procurement Work plan • Zero Carbon in Construction Procurement Pilot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening of County Tree Nursery • Woodland creation at: Dyserth (Maes Esgob); Rhyl (Maes Gwilym); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildflower Meadow Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and Engagement Work plan (including public events in Autumn/Winter)

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	Potentially 2-3 other sites TBC		
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HVE took the group through the proposed investment plan for 2022/23 which included budget for prudential borrowing to undertake further capital projects and to employ some additional staff within service areas to support delivery and manage the improvements that are being installed. These figures will be put forward for consideration within the annual Budget Setting process which involves consultation with Members and the public each year.

GT – clear that to reduce carbon from buildings at the rate we need will require larger investment.

MD – suggested tree planting could be carried out on Rhuddlan wide verge from Llanelwy to Rhuddlan – other large and wide verges could be considered for trees

GK – questioned whether it was social housing or offices causing most emission issues within Buildings. HVE confirmed council housing is not included in our figures. A lot of intervention coming down from Welsh Government for decarbonisation of social housing. Leisure sites and Secondary schools are the highest emitters of carbon within the Council owned buildings in scope of Net Carbon Zero.

7. Communication and Engagement Plan 2021/22

LWJ presented current thinking for proposed public facing events in Autumn/Winter 2021.

Key principals behind thinking:

- Aim to hold around COP26 (31 October – 12 November 2021)- Autumn/Winter 2021
- Mindful of time
- Look to work in partnership
- May still be restricted to virtual events

Ideas included:

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- Social media takeover (including content for posts and hosting of question and answer live sessions)
- A series of Denbighshire for COP26 Webinars (including themes such as Governance, Community Action, Business, Landowners)
- Activity exclusively for Youth Via schools and other youth settings (potential to co-create something creative as an output)

LWJ opened up to floor to seek group feedback and thoughts to early plans.

GT- regarding school's participation. Every school required to do thought of/worship of the day (10-15 minutes a day). That this thought/worship could be based on climate change and COP 26 for a period of time. Provide school resources around the thought of the day – potentially a different one each day for a week. School transport could be a focus for theme for day.

GT- regarding businesses. Creation of a tool box tool kit for business- provision of resources to have conversations with their staff about this agenda.

GK- Must recognise and applaud that the climate movement has been children led from beginning.

AR- Donaldson report will surely ensure that climate change is included in curriculum. Can we link up with Sustrans on the school's engagement work to encourage journeys via walking or cycling to school each day. Supporting Governors to be challenging schools on their climate change action

BJ- Ysgol Llewelyn in Rhyl has achieved bronze standard with Sustrans on walking and cycling- good case study for other schools- plus learning from the pilot ran beginning of this year where part of road closed off near the school to improve air quality and make school access more safe.

BJ- As an authority we could produce a video on what the council is doing on agenda to be published and promoted during engagement period. Send it to lots of stakeholders including schools.

ACTIONS:

- LWJ- to build in feedback and ideas received into the planning for the public facing events in Autumn/Winter 2021.

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8. Forward Plan and Any other business

HVE took group through forward plan for 2021.

Group agreed that needed to move date of March meeting to February as report going to Full Council on 22nd February.

Meeting Date	Possible Agenda Items
November 16 th 2021, 14.00-16.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Introduction and Progress Report on Ash Die Back Project- Climate and Ecological Change Programme Budget Entry in Council 2022/23 budget- Corporate Plan long list of priorities and synergy with Climate and Ecological Change agenda- Discussion around pesticide use in grounds maintenance and the Councils current policy.
March 1st 2022, 14.00-16.00 Changed to February 1 st 2022, 14.00-16.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Approval of draft report to County Council (progress achieved to date, prior to the end of the current Council's term of office)

ACTIONS:

- HVE- change March meeting to February.

No any other business discussed.