

Report to	Governance and Audit Committee
Date of meeting	26 th January 2022
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Brian Jones (Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment), Cllr Tony Thomas (Lead Member for Housing and Communities), / Alan Smith (BIM Head of Service & Climate and Ecological Change Programme Senior Responsible Owner)
Report author	Helen Vaughan-Evans / Andrew Cutts (Climate Change Programme Manager / Maternity Cover)
Title	Audit Wales Report – Denbighshire County Council Delivering Environmental Ambitions

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. This report summarises the Audit Wales Report of Delivering Environmental Ambitions in Denbighshire County Council and provides Officers' responses to the Proposals for Improvement.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To ensure Elected Members are kept informed of and able to scrutinise observations and actions following an external audit of Denbighshire County Council.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 That Members consider the report, the associated Proposals for Improvement and Officers' responses, providing feedback as appropriate.

4. Report details

- 4.1. In December 2020 to June 2021 Audit Wales undertook a review of Denbighshire County Council's ability to deliver on its environmental ambitions, including how the

Council plans to integrate, embed, measure, and communicate its environmental ambitions. The full report is included in Appendix 1.

4.2. The final report was issued in October 2021 and reached the conclusion that the Council is making excellent progress in embedding its environmental ambitions.

4.3. The report stated that this conclusion had been reached because:

- The Council has moved quickly to embed its environmental ambitions in its strategic planning frameworks and has allocated significant resources, but the full cost of the ambition is not yet known.
- The Council has communicated well with citizens, trying to inform, influence and change behaviours, and more comprehensive stakeholder mapping would further strengthen engagement.
- The Council has worked hard to communicate and train both councillors and staff, and though understanding is developing well more detail is needed on what 'ecologically positive' means to the Council and how the ambitions influence everyone's daily work.
- The Council has put baseline measures in place using an established performance framework, reporting over the next year will help the environmental ambitions to embed and the measures to evolve.

4.4. The report goes on to make 10 recommendations for improvement. Appendix 2 provides the recommendations for improvement and officers' initial response including what is proposed to be done in response.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

5.1 Delivering on the Council's Environmental Ambitions will make a direct contribution to delivering upon the Council's Climate Change and Ecological Emergency declaration which committed the Council to become Net Carbon Zero by 2030 and improve biodiversity in Denbighshire. It will also make a direct contribution to delivering upon the subsequently adopted Climate and Ecological Change Strategy 2021-2030, by supporting the reduction in carbon emissions, increase in carbon sequestration and improvement of species richness of our land so that the Council can achieve its 2030

goals of Net Carbon Zero, Ecologically Positive and 35% reduction in supply chain emissions.

5.2 Delivering on the Council's Environmental Ambitions will support the Council in making its 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 to Net Zero by 2050 and supports the Council's 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. There are no costs arising directly from this report.

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

7.1 A Well-being Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

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

8.1 Report findings and areas of improvement have been discussed at the Climate and Ecological Change Programme Operational Board, Chief Executive Team and the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Political Working Group.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 Not required.

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

10.1. There are no additional risks arising from this report.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1 No decision is required.