

Report to	Council
Date of meeting	22 nd February 2022
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Brian Jones (Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment), Cllr Tony Thomas (Lead Member for Housing and Communities), Cllr Graham Timms (Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Political Working Group Chair) / Alan Smith (BIM Head of Service & Climate and Ecological Change Programme Senior Responsible Owner)
Report author	Andrew Cutts (Climate Change Programme Manager- Maternity Cover)
Title	Climate and Ecological Change Strategy – Update on Year 1 delivery

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 To provide information on the delivery and progress made so far during year 1 of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy 2021-2030 ('Strategy') delivery and explore options for the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Political Working Group and induction of Members following the May 2022 elections.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs in March 2021 agreed to continue the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Political Working Group up until the end of this Council and for this Working Group then to present a report to County Council during the Spring of 2022 on the progress achieved to date, prior to the end of the current Council's term of office.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 To note the progress made so far during year 1 of the Strategy delivery.
- 3.2 To agree in principal to continue the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Political Working Group into new Council (2022-2027).

- 3.3 To provide feedback on the draft plan / approach for inducting Members of the new Council after the May 2022 elections on this agenda.
- 3.4 That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 1) as part of its consideration.
- 3.5 To consider the creation of a dedicated Cabinet lead for Climate and Ecological Change as recommended by the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Political Working Group.

4. Report details

- 4.1. The Council declared a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency in July 2019. Subsequently the [Climate and Ecological Change Strategy \(2021/22-2029/30\)](#) was adopted in February 2021 which commits the Council to become a Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive Council by 2030 in addition to reducing carbon emissions from the goods and services we buy (the Council's supply chain) by 35% by 2030.
- 4.2 The Strategy provides a route map to achieve the 2030 goals. There are a number of key performance indicators that are being used to judge the performance of the Council in achieving its 2030 goals, including: reducing carbon emissions the Council emits from various sources, increasing carbon sequestration of land the Council owns/leases and manages and increasing the species richness of the land the Council owns/leases and manages.
- 4.3 Whilst the first year of judgement against goal delivery is 2021/22 (the first year of the Strategy), 2020/21 performance has been monitored and results given in Appendix 2. This was included in the Annual Performance Review 2020/21 which was approved by Council on 6th July 2021.
- 4.4 Learning from 2020/21 and the impact of Covid-19 along with the understanding that we need to reduce our carbon emissions as much as we can has led to the adjustment of our targeted delivery pathway within our Net Carbon Zero goal. This is summarised in Appendix 3.
- 4.5 The Climate and Ecological Change Strategy lists 37 policy/process changes and 75 activities that the Council would undertake to deliver on our 2030 goals. All these policy/process changes and activities are 'owned' by individual Service Areas and listed within Service Business Plans. This list of actions is not static

and can be added to at any time and will need to be in order to continually improve and deliver on our 2030 goals. The next official review and refresh of the Strategy, date as published in the strategy document, is 2023/24.

- 4.6 Progress status updates on Service Business Plans are sought every quarter which now include Climate and Ecological Change Strategy actions.
- 4.7 The Strategy is being delivered as a Programme with 8 work streams underneath it. Under each work stream a set of deliberate projects will be developed and delivered each financial year, subject to funding. The Programme status is reported using RAG methodology every 6 weeks for the overall programme (achieving 2030 goals) and for the projects being delivered during that particular financial year (2021/22). The in-year status RAG is currently “Yellow- Experiencing Obstacles”. The step change in pace and scale of projects being delivered in 2021/22 compared to previous years is highly commended but delay in mobilisation has meant a delay in benefit realisation resulting in the yellow RAG status (1 down from green).
- 4.8 See Appendix 4 for an update on Council progress on this agenda since the Emergency Declaration in 2019 and projects delivered in Year 1 in newsletter form which exemplifies the progressive and commendable work.
- 4.9 DCC was audited by Audit Wales in December 2020 to June 2021 on its ability to deliver on its environmental ambitions, including how the Council plans to integrate, embed, measure, and communicate its environmental ambitions. Audit Wales’ findings were highly positive and further information can be viewed via [Governance and Audit Committee report](#) (26th January 2022).
- 4.10 There is a recommendation from the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Political Working Group, supported by the Lead Members, to continue the group following election in May 2022, reflecting on the positive impact such a working group has had working with officers. The Terms of Reference for the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Political Working Group is provided in Appendix 5. If Council agree in principal to this recommendation, Democratic Services would ask, following the May elections, for political grouping to nominate 2 representatives for the working group and would support the first meeting including the nomination of chair and vice chair.
- 4.11 A draft outline plan for inducting Members of the new Council after the May 2022 elections on this agenda is provided in Appendix 6 and feedback is welcomed by Councillors on this Council in readiness.

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

- 5.1 Year 1 of 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 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 Some 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 term. All interventions will be individually financially appraised via capital business cases and through revenue budget plans and processes. In 2021/22 £200,000 has been allocated for staff and £189,000 for prudential borrowing repayments to lever c.£2m of capital investment. Further investment of £0.440m in 2022/23 provides £0.233m for additional staff to undertake the necessary work and the remaining £0.207m is to fund the revenue impact of capital spend (prudential borrowing).
- 6.2 The council will not have to provide all of the money to deliver the Strategy itself. We expect that grants from Welsh Government, National Government and supporting bodies will be available to help fund the planned work over the 9 years. So far in 2021/22 the Council has attracted £849,049 of external funding to deliver its programme of net carbon zero and ecologically positive work which has reduced the prudential borrowing requirement on the Council from this Programme.

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

7.1 The DCC 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 1 for full report.

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

8.1 The Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2020/21-2029/30) was consulted on with Members in September/October 2020, with the public in November/December 2020 and finally adopted unanimously by Council in February 2021.

8.2 Actions within the Strategy have been subject to Scrutiny during 2021/22, including at Communities Scrutiny in September 2021.

8.3 This paper has been coproduced with the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Political Working Group.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 Significant investment will be required to address the issues and ambition of the Strategy. It is important that external sources of funding are maximised in order to help lower the impact on the Council's finances. As detailed in section 6, the approved Budget for 2022/23 includes investment of £0.440m. Further medium and long term investment will be considered during the Budget Process for 2023/24 and beyond as the detailed plans and funding schemes are put together.

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

10.1 Notable risks are included in Appendix 7.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1 See Appendix 8 for relevant powers.