



## **Land use and acquisition for carbon sequestration and ecological improvement purposes :**

### **Well-being Impact Assessment Report**

This report summarises the likely impact of the proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

**Assessment Number:** 957

**Brief description:** In order to help achieve the Council's ambition to become Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030.... - The concept of woodland creation on land in Council ownership - The concept of acquiring land for the purpose of carbon sequestration and biodiversity

**Date Completed:** 01/02/2022 08:32:53 Version: 1

**Completed by:** Andrew Cutts

**Responsible Service:** Business Improvement & Modernisation

**Localities affected by the proposal:** Whole County,

**Who will be affected by the proposal?** Positively - Residents - Tourism industry - Visitors - Flora and fauna (plants and animals) - Council staff Negatively - Tenants of land we own but currently lease out - Other potential buyers of land

**Was this impact assessment completed as a group?** Yes

## **Summary and Conclusion**

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

### **Score for the sustainability of the approach**

**3 out of 4 stars**

**Actual score : 31 / 36.**

### **Summary for each Sustainable Development principle**

#### **Long term**

Progressing land use for the purpose of carbon sequestration and ecological improvement has long term thinking at its heart. To deliver immediate benefit of reduced flood risk, recreational value, urban cooling, health and wellbeing. And over time increase its benefit in carbon sequestration and air quality improvement. To continue to score highly in this principal need to ensure maintenance and management is appropriately addressed.

#### **Prevention**

Woodland creation is for the purpose of increasing carbon sequestration and ecological improvement and thus reduce climate change and nature's decline. Each site will be considered on an individual basis and in relation to the wider landscape - if appropriate, tree planting will be chosen for increasing canopy coverage. However, natural regeneration of trees and woodland will be the preferred option. Added benefits around increasing wellbeing through access to nature on peoples doorsteps.

#### **Integration**

Multiple benefits involved in woodland creation hitting other well-being goals and corporate priorities. Other public body objectives would be- NRW for flooding; Betsi Cadwaladr for health. Compatibility of carbon sequestration and ecology goals with the LDP is an interesting one and being actively

Land use and acquisition for carbon sequestration and ecological improvement purposes explored in the developing new LDP. Main compatibility focus would be how land is classified in the county.

### Collaboration

Wide collaboration internally across multiple services and departments, including the AONB Partnership. More limited externally, but early collaboration discussions with NRW. Stakeholder engagement has taken place with members of the agricultural community.

### Involvement

Engagement has been limited with residents on woodland creation and done currently on a site by site basis e.g. the public consultation day at Maes Gwilym (Rhyl) in June 2021. This will need to be ramped up throughout the 9 years. Proposal is that a lot of engagement is done via the Member Area Groups, Lead Members and Ward Members. This could be extended to C,T&CC's too as well as direct to residents.

### Summary of impact

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
<a href="#">A prosperous Denbighshire</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A resilient Denbighshire</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A healthier Denbighshire</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A more equal Denbighshire</a>	Neutral
<a href="#">A Denbighshire of cohesive communities</a>	Neutral
<a href="#">A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</a>	Neutral

<b>Well-being Goals</b>	<b>Overall Impact</b>
<a href="#">A globally responsible Denbighshire</a>	Positive

### **Main conclusions**

The proposal has a strong positive impact to the delivery of 4 out of the 7 wellbeing goals and no negative contribution (remaining 3 goals neutral impact), particularly for the delivery of a resilient Denbighshire and a globally responsible Denbighshire. It also scores high (31/36) on the sustainable development principals with "long term" and "prevention" being at the proposals heart.

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## **The likely impact on Denbighshire, Wales and the world.**

### **A prosperous Denbighshire**

#### **Overall Impact**

Positive

#### **Justification for impact**

Proposal has the potential to provide additional social, environmental and economic value to Denbighshire increasing its prosperity, particular in the areas of access to green space and boosting the visitor economy.

#### **Further actions required**

Ensuring Countryside Services fleet vehicles transition early to ULEV early in the 9 year decarbonisation of fleet programme leading up to 2030.

Ensuring land use allocation in LDP is actively considered in site selection for woodland creation plus considerations around grading of agricultural land. Unproductive land prioritised for woodland creation wherever possible.

#### **Positive impacts identified:**

##### **A low carbon society**

Woodland creation and nature areas will be done by natural regeneration wherever possible and by utilising wildflower seed harvested locally or/and trees grown by our Council Tree Nursery

##### **Quality communications, infrastructure and transport**

Proposal is both safeguarding and creating new green space for the benefit of recreation, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity.

##### **Economic development**

Proposal has benefits for the tourism industry/ visitor economy as more nature sites for people to visit and enjoy.

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**Quality skills for the long term**

Proposal opens up opportunities for skill development in green industries.

**Quality jobs for the long term**

No direct jobs are suggested to be created by this proposal currently but likely to support the developing green industry in North Wales.

**Childcare**

n/a

**Negative impacts identified:**

**A low carbon society**

Increasing the number of woodland sites the Council owns will require staff to travel to these sites to periodically check up on them. However, Countryside Services fleet will be transitioning to EV's by 2030 reducing carbon impact.

**Quality communications, infrastructure and transport**

n/a

**Economic development**

Potential competing demands on land needing to be used for woodland creation. Land allocated for employment in LDP will not be utilised.

**Quality skills for the long term**

n/a

**Quality jobs for the long term**

n/a

## **Childcare**

n/a

## **A resilient Denbighshire**

### **Overall Impact**

Positive

### **Justification for impact**

This workstream is all about creating woodland and spaces for nature to the benefit of increasing the County's resilience to climate change and its impacts such as flooding.

### **Further actions required**

Need to ensure only suitable tree species are incorporated on wetlands or marsh land which would impair that habitat in retaining water.

### **Positive impacts identified:**

#### **Biodiversity and the natural environment**

This workstream is all about creating woodland and spaces for nature. The definition for woodland will be maximised on (i.e. 20% of square meter with tree cover) to allow for a matrix of habitat to be created to support a great species diversity. Mixed broadleaf and yew native planting progressed.

#### **Biodiversity in the built environment**

n/a

#### **Reducing waste, reusing and recycling**

n/a

#### **Reduced energy/fuel consumption**

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n/a

### **People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity**

By having more green spaces and spaces for nature accessible to people will increase peoples awareness and appreciation of environment and biodiversity. Also the wider communication on why the Council is doing this i.e. to increase the capture of carbon emissions to prevent worsening climate change.

### **Flood risk management**

Mutual benefits between carbon sequestration, ecological improvement and reducing flood risk will be maximised upon e.g. through planting of upstream catchment areas to trap more water upstream for longer.

### **Negative impacts identified:**

#### **Biodiversity and the natural environment**

n/a

#### **Biodiversity in the built environment**

n/a

#### **Reducing waste, reusing and recycling**

n/a

#### **Reduced energy/fuel consumption**

n/a

### **People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity**

n/a

### **Flood risk management**



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Need to ensure only suitable tree species are incorporated on wetlands or marsh land which would impair that habitat in retaining water.

## **A healthier Denbighshire**

### **Overall Impact**

Positive

### **Justification for impact**

The improvement of existing green spaces into woodland and creation of new woodlands and places for nature provide greater interest and opportunities to promote health and mental wellbeing goals as well as leisure and activity pursuits.

### **Further actions required**

Need to be careful where woodland created to avoid any feelings of 'loss' for how the land used previously.

Need to take community with us and engender a feeling of joint ownership with local people so to avoid issues of vandalism/anti social behaviour.

### **Positive impacts identified:**

#### **A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being**

The improvement of existing green spaces into woodland and creation of new woodlands and places for nature provide greater interest and opportunities to promote health and wellbeing goals. Such as volunteering, connecting to the signs and sounds of nature, access to enjoy the open air.

#### **Access to good quality, healthy food**

n/a

#### **People's emotional and mental well-being**

There is a much researched and evidenced link between being outdoors amongst nature and the

Land use and acquisition for carbon sequestration and ecological improvement purposes improvement of mental well-being. The improvement of existing green spaces into woodland and creation of new woodlands and places for nature provide increased and geographically spread access.

### **Access to healthcare**

n/a

### **Participation in leisure opportunities**

The improvement of existing green spaces into woodland and creation of new woodlands and places for nature provide increased and geographically spread access to increase availability of these places for leisure.

### **Negative impacts identified:**

#### **A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being**

Increased opportunity for vandalism and/or places for anti social activities to take place. However, such concerns would be addressed prior to site alterations to aim for a focus on the positive opportunity overall.

### **Access to good quality, healthy food**

n/a

### **People's emotional and mental well-being**

Need to be careful where woodland created to avoid any feelings of 'loss' for how the land was used previously.

### **Access to healthcare**

n/a

### **Participation in leisure opportunities**

Need to be careful where woodland created to avoid any feelings of 'loss' for how the land used

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## **A more equal Denbighshire**

### **Overall Impact**

Neutral

### **Justification for impact**

A more equal Denbighshire isn't a core objective of this project but has a contribution to play and at the very least is being planned in a way that doesn't exacerbate inequalities.

### **Further actions required**

Ensure any access requirements addressed when creating woodland and spaces for nature which are open to public. Maximise on opportunities for woodland creation and spaces for nature in or close to areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage.

### **Positive impacts identified:**

**Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation**

This activity is being delivered to tackle climate change and nature's decline which impacts everyone.

### **People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage**

If existing green spaces are improved or new woodland created which includes public access that access requirements to enable all people to contribute will be pursued.

### **People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes**

Woodland creation could be in locations of socio-economic disadvantage. Some external grants for woodland creation have this as a prerequisite for access to grant. This could provide volunteering opportunities to people with socio-economic disadvantage on their doorstep.

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### **Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage**

Woodland creation could be in locations of socio-economic disadvantage. Some external grants for woodland creation have this as a prerequisite for access to grant.

### **Negative impacts identified:**

**Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation**

n/a

### **People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage**

n/a

### **People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes**

n/a

### **Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage**

Location of sites for woodland creation will be led on land availability and the site's appropriateness (for various environmental factors) for woodland creation, it won't be led in the first instance by where areas of socio-economic disadvantage are.

### **A Denbighshire of cohesive communities**

#### **Overall Impact**

Neutral

#### **Justification for impact**

A Denbighshire of cohesive communities isn't a core objective of this project but has contribution to play particularly around resilience.

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### **Further actions required**

Need to take community with us and engender a feeling of joint ownership for woodland created with the community so to avoid issues of vandalism/anti social behaviour. Need to think about how visitors get to sites created which are more rural if they have public access.

### **Positive impacts identified:**

#### **Safe communities and individuals**

n/a

#### **Community participation and resilience**

Woodland creation on sites close to where people live, we will engage the local population on plans for the site- seeking their views on what they want to see and seeking their views for design of the sites.

Mutual benefit of using woodland to reduce flood risk will also be maximised upon where possible and thus increase community resilience to impacts of climate change.

#### **The attractiveness of the area**

This project is about safeguarding and increasing green space for the benefit carbon absorption and biodiversity and thus increases attractiveness of area and opportunities for recreation.

#### **Connected communities**

Some people prefer to travel on foot/bike and will have greater opportunity to move through accessible and connected green spaces.

#### **Rural resilience**

Work to improve biodiversity, including diversity and abundance of insect pollinators, supports the farming industry through crop pollination. Woodland creation on non productive land gives formally low value land a higher value. Increasing woodland creation and spaces for nature could increase footfall into rural areas and opportunities for rural assets like pubs, shops, cafes.

### **Negative impacts identified:**

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### **Safe communities and individuals**

Increased opportunity for vandalism and/or places for anti social activities to take place.

### **Community participation and resilience**

n/a

### **The attractiveness of the area**

n/a

### **Connected communities**

n/a

### **Rural resilience**

n/a

### **A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language**

#### **Overall Impact**

Neutral

#### **Justification for impact**

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language isn't a core objective of this project but has contribution to play particularly around use of any information board or incorporation of any art/sculpture into sites created.

#### **Further actions required**

Ensure site selection for woodland creation is considerate to any sites of cultural and heritage significance - particularly relevant for any woodland creation within the AONB area of Denbighshire.

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**Positive impacts identified:**

**People using Welsh**

Any signage or information relating to sites created will be bilingual.

**Promoting the Welsh language**

Any signage or information relating to sites created will be bilingual.

**Culture and heritage**

Any signage or information relating to sites which could also tell a local story about the wider place could be maximised upon e.g. Pengwern can translate to 'head of the alder (a species of tree) swamp'.

**Negative impacts identified:**

**People using Welsh**

n/a

**Promoting the Welsh language**

n/a

**Culture and heritage**

Ensure site selection for woodland creation is considerate to any sites of cultural and heritage significance - particularly relevant for any woodland creation within the AONB area of Denbighshire.

**A globally responsible Denbighshire**

**Overall Impact**

Positive

**Justification for impact**

## Land use and acquisition for carbon sequestration and ecological improvement purposes

This proposal is all about increasing woodland for carbon sequestration purposes whilst improving biodiversity and thus specifically about preventing the problem of climate and nature's decline from getting worse.

### **Further actions required**

No negatives of note. Opportunities for mutual benefit in tackling the impact of climate and ecological change already being felt will be maximised upon e.g. woodland creation to reduce flood risk, tree cover to reduce air pollution and urban heating etc.

### **Positive impacts identified:**

#### **Local, national, international supply chains**

Trees, plants, seeds will be of native provenance and sourced as locally as possible, if not grown internally at the Council's Tree Nursery.

Projects for woodland creation could provide activity for contractors working for the Council on other contracts to contribute to via Community Benefits process.

#### **Human rights**

n/a

#### **Broader service provision in the local area or the region**

n/a

#### **Reducing climate change**

This proposal is all about increasing woodland for carbon sequestration purposes whilst improving biodiversity and thus specifically about preventing the problem of climate and nature's decline from getting worse.

Opportunities for mutual benefit in tackling the impact of climate and ecological change already being felt will be maximised upon e.g. woodland creation to reduce flood risk, tree cover to reduce air pollution and urban heating etc. Thus the proposal is likely to better prepare Denbighshire and beyond for a future with climate change.



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**Negative impacts identified:**

**Local, national, international supply chains**

An active 'grow your own' or buy local approach will be undertaken thus national and international supply chains will 'miss out'

**Human rights**

n/a

**Broader service provision in the local area or the region**

n/a

**Reducing climate change**

n/a