Report to	Governance and Audit Committee
Date of meeting	24th April 2024
Lead Member/Officer	Cllr Barry Mellor (Lead Member for Environment and Transport) / Gary Williams (Corporate Director - Governance and Business & Climate and Ecological Change Programme Senior Responsible Owner)
Head of Service	Helen Vaughan-Evans (Head of Corporate Support Service- Performance, Digital and Assets)
Report author	Liz Wilcox-Jones (Interim Climate Change Programme Manager)
Title	Progress Update: DCC's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021/22 – 2029/30)

1. What is the report about?

- o The latest key performance indicator performance of the Council (2022/23) and direction of travel in achieving Net Carbon Zero Council, Ecologically Positive Council and 35% reduction in Supply Chain Emissions by 2030.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 To update Committee on the Council's progress on becoming Net Carbon Zero, Ecologically Positive and 35% reduction in Supply Chain Emissions by 2030.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. For Committee to note the Council's key performance indicator performance for 2022/23 and direction of travel in achieving Net Carbon Zero Council, Ecologically Positive Council and 35% reduction in Supply Chain Emissions by 2030.

3.2. For Committee to note the consultation on Year 3 update of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and governance for adoption.

4. Report details

4.1 The Council declared a [Climate Change and Ecological Emergency](#) in July 2019 which committed the Council to become Net Carbon Zero by 2030 at the latest and improve biodiversity across the County amongst other things. 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. The Council also changed its constitution in October 2020, so all decisions made by the Council must now 'have regard to tackling Climate and Ecological Change'.

4.2 The Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021/22-2029/30) is scheduled to be reviewed and refreshed every 3 years. The first official review and refresh of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy is 2023/24 and the following has been completed as part of that review and refresh:

1. Launching of approach and agreeing parameters to work within with CET and Performance Scrutiny March- June 2023.
2. A public online survey was run between 18th May to 2nd July 2023 and an in person public workshop completed in November 2023.
3. Service specific workshops were run with all service areas in November 2023.
4. Engagement throughout with Greener Denbighshire Board and cross-party political Climate Change and Ecological Emergency working group, including review of the Year 3 reviewed and updated draft at 21st February and 1st March meetings respectively.

5. Engagement throughout with Lead Member (Barry Mellor) and CET Lead/Programme Sponsor (Gary Williams).

6. Engagement and confirmation of actions within draft with Heads of Service, Middle Managers and key officers in the Council.

7. Tabling of the Year 3 reviewed and updated draft at Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on 8th February and Cabinet Briefing on 4th March.

4.3 The draft Year 3 Updated Strategy document is currently out for final consultation and can be accessed here. The consultation runs for 8 weeks from Monday March 25th until Monday May 20th. The draft strategy is being discussed at all Member Area Groups during April and May and the process for final sign off on the Year 3 Updated strategy is as follows:

1. Cabinet Briefing - June 3rd

2. Performance Scrutiny - June 6th.

3. Cabinet- June 25th

4. Council- July 9th

4.4 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. Please see Appendix 1 for the 2022/23 performance report for the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy. Whilst we are going in the right direction it is not currently at the pace which indicates sufficient progress is being made to meet the 2030 goal of net zero. We have set high ambitions for rate of progress and thus the status has moved from "Good" to "Priority for Improvement" for 2022/23. The data story is more positive for biodiversity and "Acceptable" progress is being made to meet the Council's Ecologically Positive 2030 goal. The supply chain status for 2022/23 remains as a 'priority for improvement' as carbon emissions in this area continue to increase compared to baseline. However, due to current methodology, reductions of supply chain emissions are difficult to accurately quantify and significant change in performance in the data is likely only to come with improved emissions calculation.

4.5 2022/23 is the latest year of data and elements of this data was included in the [Annual Performance Review 2022/23](#) which was approved by Council on 4th July. Our emission data is submitted to Welsh Government in September of each year with our 2022/23 data submitted by 4 September 2023.

4.6 With regard to the emissions and sequestration that make up the Net Carbon Zero target, there is expected to be opportunities to pick up the pace in some sources of emissions/sequestration but confidence in delivering the percentage reduction/increase by 2030 in other areas is lower including: buildings, staff commuting, sequestration and supply chain. This has been made clear in the strategy review. See page 23 and section on 'Where do we want to get to?' of [draft Year 3 updated strategy](#) for further information. The financial pressures all local authorities are facing now and in the coming years will impact on that pace further. We plan to maintain our Climate and Ecological Improvement ambition and not adjust targets, despite their challenge, as we go into the next 3 years of our strategy with the resources we have available.

4.7 Capital and revenue projects are undertaken each year under the programme to bring about the change required to meet our goals, along with service areas progressing the 37 policy/process changes and 75 activities that the Council committed to undertake within the Strategy and listed within individual Service Business Plans. Progress status updates on Service Business Plans are sought every quarter by Strategic Planning Team which include Climate and Ecological Change Strategy activities.

4.7 Notwithstanding the pace of achievement expressed in the data, great work is continuing to be done by officers in the climate and ecological change agenda. See Appendix 2 for the latest [newsletter](#), and the latest news about projects being undertaken can be found on the Council's website, under [news](#) and filter for "Climate and ecological change". A further summary newsletter will be produced in May 2024.

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

5.1 Achievement of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy makes a direct contribution to delivering upon part of the Council's Climate Change and Ecological

Emergency declaration which committed the Council to become Net Carbon Zero by 2030 along with improving biodiversity in Denbighshire. It supports the Council in making its contribution to the Welsh Government policy for the public sector to be carbon neutral by 2030 and for Wales to meet its legally binding target of reducing emissions to Net Zero by 2050 and increasing the resilience of ecosystems as listed in Environmental (Wales) Act 2016. It contributes the delivery of the themes and pledges within the new Corporate Plan (2022-2027), in particular Connected Communities and Greener Denbighshire.

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 Not required for this report.

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.