

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	6th June 2024
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor 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 & Assets)
Report author	Liz Wilcox-Jones (Interim Climate Change Programme Manager)
Title	Year 3 Review and Refresh of Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021/22-2029/30)

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 To present to Scrutiny information regarding the Year 3 reviewed and refreshed Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021/22 to 2029/30).

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 Following Scrutiny's consideration of the planned approach to complete the Year 3 review and refresh of the document in June 2023, this paper provides Scrutiny with an update on conclusion of that process including:

- the draft Year 3 reviewed and refreshed Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021/22 to 2029/30) document that went out for public consultation in May (appendix 1).
- the initial findings of the public consultation on the drafted document (appendix 2);

- the changes proposed to be made to document in light of the public consultation (appendix 3).

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 For Scrutiny to review and provide feedback on the development of the Year 3 reviewed and refreshed Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and state their support or otherwise for its adoption and implementation by Council.
- 3.2 For Scrutiny to determine whether it wishes to monitor its delivery going forward with a view to supporting the Council to deliver its net carbon zero ambition by 2030.
- 3.3 For Scrutiny to confirm that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (appendix 4) as part of its consideration.

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 Denbighshire County Council's 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:
 - a) Launching of approach and agreeing parameters to work within with the Corporate Executive Team (CET) and Performance Scrutiny March- June 2023.
 - b) An initial public online survey was run between 18th May to 2nd July 2023 and an in person public workshop completed in November 2023.
 - c) Service specific workshops were run with all service areas in November 2023.

- d) 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 2024 meetings respectively.
- e) Engagement throughout with Lead Member (Barry Mellor) and CET Lead/Programme Sponsor (Gary Williams).
- f) Engagement and confirmation of actions within draft with Heads of Service, Middle Managers and key officers in the Council.
- g) Tabling of the Year 3 reviewed and updated draft at Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on 8th February and Cabinet Briefing on 4th March.
- h) A public consultation was run on the updated draft from March 25th until May 20th 2024 and strategy was discussed at all Member Area Groups during April and May 2024.

4.3 Revised and updated areas of the strategy of particular note include:

- 4.3.1 The addition of three new sections acknowledging the wider influence the Council can have in bringing about change in this agenda across the county of Denbighshire, the requirement to increase resilience to climate change already 'baked in' and to respond to the broadening of scope in local and national plans.
- 4.3.2 Introduction of a technical appendix as a place to include history of completed process/policy changes and projects/activities included in previous iterations of the Strategy document and to provide additional more in-depth information about performance to date. This includes further information on areas where achieving the required target is experiencing challenge.
- 4.3.3 The specific process/ policy changes and actions/ projects associated with the strategy delivery have been updated in the draft document. Items that have been completed are listed in the technical appendix.

4.4 The draft Year 3 Updated Strategy document has now been out for final public consultation. Please see Appendix 1 for the strategy draft that has been reviewed by the public.

- 4.5 The online consultation ran for 8 weeks from March 25th until May 20th. The draft strategy was discussed at all Member Area Groups during April and May. Some submissions were made directly to the Climate Change team. 336 responses were received in total which have now been analysed. Please see Appendix 2 for a report on the initial findings of the public consultation on the drafted document. Of note is 88% of respondents agreed that the Council should adopt the revised strategy document.
- 4.6 A number of pieces of feedback were received on how the Council could further improve the revised strategy document. Appendix 3 provides an outline of the changes proposed to be made to document in light of the public consultation.
- 4.7 The proposed schedule for final sign off on the Year 3 Updated strategy is as follows:
- Cabinet Briefing - June 3rd
 - Performance Scrutiny - June 6th.
 - Cabinet- June 25th
 - Council- July 9th

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

- 5.1 Ensuring the strategy remains relevant, up to date and bought into is integral to delivering upon the Council's Climate Change and Ecological Emergency declaration (2019) which committed the Council to become Net Carbon Zero by 2030 and improve biodiversity in Denbighshire. Refreshing the targets, achievement pathways and activities regularly helps to maintain the focus and ambition required to deliver on the 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. By progressing and completing the activities within the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy 2021-2030 will directly contribute towards the following theme in the Corporate Plan 2022-2027: A 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. Servicing of the review have been met within existing staff and financial resources.

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

7.1 Please see appendix 4 for the WIA of the Year 3 revised strategy document. Under the five delivery principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act the Strategy scored 3 out of 4 stars (actual score 32/36). Against the seven well-being goals of the Act, the potential impact of the Strategy is evaluated as 6 Positive and 1 Neutral.

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

8.1 Please see detail in section 4.2 of this report.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 The Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy has involved significant financial investment over recent years and will continue to require investment going forward. However, the financial pressures that the Council is now facing may impact on the available funding in the next few years. Although the review itself can be contained within existing resources, it is important that the programme continue to work through the revenue and capital budget setting processes of the Council when additional resource requirements are identified.

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 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

11.2 Section 7.4 of the Council's Constitution outlines Scrutiny's role in policy development and review.