

Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021-2030): 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: 802

Brief description: The Strategy is all about the Council achieving Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030. The document explains what we mean by those two goals, how the Council is currently performing on both, what we hope 2030 will look like for the Council having achieved our goals and the changes and actions we hope to deliver over the next 9 years, subject to the securing of the necessary funds. The strategy contains a set of existing and new policies across the range of Council services and operations that are supportive of low carbon, increased carbon sequestration and biodiversity improvement. The Strategy covers the years 2021/22 – 2029/30 and outline the projects/activities the Council intends to deliver, subject to the securing of the necessary funds, to work towards achieving our net carbon zero and ecologically positive Council goals. Note: The scope of the strategy is council owned emissions and council owned land- coverage isn't the whole of Denbighshire as a geographical county.

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Completed by: Liz Wilcox-Jones

Responsible Service: Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets

Localities affected by the proposal: Whole County,

Who will be affected by the proposal? - DCC Staff - DCC Councillors - DLL Staff - Schools -

Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021-2030)

Those who use our buildings - Those who use our vehicles (fleet car, pool cars etc) - Our supply chain
- Shared Services - Those who use or would like to use our open green spaces - Wildlife - DCC
Volunteers - Residents, visitors, businesses, landlords who may use a more 'green' service from us
in the future.

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 : 32 / 36.

Summary for each Sustainable Development principle

Long term

Long term thinking and securing legacy has been a central pillar in development and collation of the final strategy document. The postcards from the future provide clarity on a 2030 net carbon zero and ecologically positive council. Designing out carbon use and nature's decline is at the forefront of policy changes suggested to then maximise benefit for the long term. Legacy considered through rolling out carbon literacy and nature recovery training and embedding change in Council constitution.

Prevention

The strategy outlines where, what, how and when in terms of policy change, projects and activities needed for the Council to make its contribution to reducing carbon emissions and increasing carbon sequestration to prevent the problem of climate change getting any worse and to improve biodiversity to combat and prevent nature's decline. The strategy review has now also expanded the scope to how the council can influence area-wide carbon reduction, sequestration and nature recovery.

Integration

Integration with other goals, priorities and objectives have been considered in the development and collation of this strategy. The supporting strategies section provides the links to other agendas. Maximising cobenefits has been a central pillar in the proposed policy changes and actions within

document. References to the local development plan and ambitions for the revised LDP to actively contribute to tackling climate and ecological change within the document, as well as the LAEP.

Collaboration

The document is for Council own emissions and council owned land and collaboration has been mainly internal but broad- involving every service area, SLT, Cabinet and MAG. Ideas within the strategy originate in part to public engagement exercise conducted in November 2023 and reviewed strategy document shaped by public consultation in May 2024.

Involvement

Ideas within the strategy originate in part to public engagement exercise conducted in November 2023 and the reviewed strategy document shaped by public consultation in May 2024. Online discussion forums on the Council's Consultation Portal are being used to continue involvement and dialogue with the public. Internally staff have been consulted via service workshops and will continue to be brought into task and finish groups to shape thinking and actions as we deliver the strategy.

Summary of impact

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
A prosperous Denbighshire	Positive
A resilient Denbighshire	Positive
A healthier Denbighshire	Positive
A more equal Denbighshire	Positive
A Denbighshire of cohesive communities	Positive
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Neutral

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
A globally responsible Denbighshire	Positive

Main conclusions

The net carbon zero and ecologically positive are 2030 goals and the DCC’s Climate and Ecological Change Strategy is for a 9-year period 2021/22-2029/30 so it engenders long term thinking at its core. It outlines the action needed over next 9 years to ensure DCC contributes to mitigating climate and ecological change impacts now and for future generations.

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). To maintain the score, it will be important to continue the collaborative and integrated approach in its delivery both internally across the Council and in consultation with the public.

Against the seven well-being goals of the Act, the potential impact of the Strategy is evaluated as 6 Positive and 1 Neutral. The strategy 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 and the delivery of the programme will continue to maximise on the opportunities to do just that, with action being targeted towards inward and outward change, as well as looking to adapt and ensure resilience across communities to prepare for future impacts.

To ensure the realisation of this benefit, the programme should take a long term view on maintaining and managing anything that is put in/delivered/created and also to continue to involve residents and communities in delivering the Council's programme. This could include sharing learning so they themselves can deliver action to tackle climate and ecological change in their personal lives and within their communities. The Council will need to balance the ambitions of our local populous with the internal resource available.

The likely impact on Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

Impact is a positive one due to the direct positive impact on generating a low carbon society, the improvement in infrastructure and transport and the knock on benefits around economic development, jobs and skills.

Further actions required

It will be important to minimise any negatives around any potential reduction in office accommodation. Also, to ensure the comms narrative is multifaceted and includes the multiple benefits of this agenda, as well as the climate and nature benefits.

Positive impacts identified:

A low carbon society

This strategy is all about reducing carbon and increasing carbon sequestration (carbon absorbed by Council owned and operated land).

We will aim to reduce our carbon from our supply chain, buildings, fleet, business travel, commuting, street lighting, waste.

Our learning will be shared with the public and partners.

Our staff and councillor behaviour will be encouraging for low carbon both professionally and personally.

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

Investment in our buildings to reduce carbon will increase the quality of them.

Investment in low carbon transport and travel to support staff and councillors to choose low carbon travel options.

Protection, restoration and creation of green spaces to provide infrastructure for well being, recreation and biodiversity.

Climate risk resilience goal aims to identify risk within local areas and put plans in place to ensure our county is resilient to future impacts of climate change.

Economic development

Leveraging environmental benefit in local communities via procurement and engagement with our supply chain.

Low carbon purchasing may increase spend in more local suppliers.

Quality skills for the long term

Investment in carbon and eco literacy training for staff and councillors which will improve their skill and knowledge.

Carbon sequestration and ecological improvement projects will provide volunteer opportunities for existing volunteers and new.

Quality jobs for the long term

The strategy will be delivered as a programme and is creating 4 permanent job roles and generate work for existing staff within project management.

The programme will target the securing of external funding which will create jobs to deliver those particular projects/initiatives.

Childcare

Encouragement and strengthening of flexible working for staff and councillors will enable positive choices for staff in making work work around other responsibilities.

Negative impacts identified:

A low carbon society

No negative impacts. This strategy is all about reducing carbon and increasing carbon sequestration.

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

There may be a reduction in the number of buildings the Council own and operate in the County which potentially could impact on the footfall of people supporting rural towns.

Potential for perceived reduction in recreational space due to reduced grass cutting, tree planting and nature space creation.

Economic development

Reducing travel potentially impacting footfall in local town locations.

Quality skills for the long term

Potential automation or/and reduction of some tasks, loss of those skills.

Quality jobs for the long term

Additional new jobs could be temporary in nature if predominately externally funded.

Childcare

N/A

A resilient Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The Strategy will contain policies to reset the default in favour of low carbon, increasing carbon sequestration, protecting and restoring biodiversity and creating resilient ecosystems.

It will contain projects to deliver specific improvement actions.

A biodiversity enhancing approach is often a more hands off approach with associated revenue savings, particularly if the change in management is adopted as part of bau work within teams. Similarly the reduction of energy and fuel consumption will reduce cost.

Further actions required

A holistic view around carbon reduction is required to ensure any unintended consequences are avoided in terms of deliberate action taken.

Read across from the strategy to work being undertaken in the sphere of climate change adaptation will be required (e.g. Flooding).

Taking a whole life cost approach to projects and procurement decisions, as a corporate responsibility, will be important and ensuring maintenance/management costs of any new green spaces is properly explored and reduced as much as possible via appropriate land management choices.

Positive impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

The Strategy will contain policies to reset the default in favour of protecting and restoring biodiversity and creation resilient ecosystems.

It will contain projects to deliver specific improvement actions.

A biodiversity enhancing approach is often a more hands off approach with associated revenue savings.

Biodiversity in the built environment

The Strategy will contain policies to reset the default in favour of protecting and restoring biodiversity

and creation resilient ecosystems.

It will contain projects to deliver specific improvement actions.

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

The Strategy will contain policies to support the reduction of waste and the increase in reuse and recycling.

It will contain projects to deliver specific improvement actions in these areas.

Reducing carbon in our supply chain should also support reducing waste as whole life costing will discover products/services which have a longer operating life.

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

The Strategy will contain policies to reset the default in favour of low carbon .

It will contain projects to deliver specific improvement actions to reduce energy use in our buildings and fuel consumption in our fleet. It will also target reduction of energy and fuel consumption in our business travel and staff commuting.

Energy/fuel reduction project not only reduce carbon but also reduce cost through reduced consumption.

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

The strategy has been developed in consultation and engagement with the public.

The strategy includes council influence across the county and opportunities to support and guide communities, businesses and landowners about carbon reduction, sequestration and nature recovery.

Opportunities to continue the discussion and debate with the public will be taken via online discussion forums on our county conversation portal, a 6 monthly newsletter and an annual public engagement event.

Opportunities will be taken to include learning from our work into school eco committees, geography curriculum, youth forums.

Biodiversity and carbon sequestration projects could involve volunteers and will create spaces for nature and focus for awareness and education.

Flood risk management

Contributing to the reduction of carbon and mitigate the impacts of climate change will contribute to not making the flooding situation worse from rain and weather events.

Opportunities will be taken to link the carbon sequestration and ecological improvement agendas to reducing surface water, fluvial and coastal flooding e.g. upland management (tree planting), installation of urban rain gardens.

The strategy is about area wide climate risk resilience and climate adaptation.

Negative impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

Need to ensure if we create any new woodlands, for example, that management plan is deliverable in terms of capability and capacity.

Need to ensure we have the capacity and staff resource to manage and maintain trees planted and new nature spaces .

Biodiversity in the built environment

Need to ensure any Green Infrastructure installed is fit for purpose and properly maintained

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

Products that have a longer life may cost more upfront but cost less over the lifetime of the product.

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

Ensure that reducing energy/fuel use in one area doesn't increase energy/fuel use in another e.g.

reducing business travel and staff commuting by more home working which increases carbon generated in the home over and above what is saved.

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

Use of the online Y Portal only could preclude those lacking in digital skills and connectivity the opportunity for further engagement on the development of future projects under this proposal.

Flood risk management

Collaborative working with Flood Risk Management to understand the environmental and broader climate change impacts of flood mitigation is required.

A healthier Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The strategy aims to protect and restore existing nature spaces and create new ones.

Access to local green space has been linked to better social outcomes around health and well-being.

Spaces will aim to be restored and created via the use of volunteers.

Further actions required

Need to ensure any green spaces created are designed with all users in mind including biodiversity.

Positive impacts identified:

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

The strategy will aim to protect and restore existing nature spaces and create new ones.

Access to local green space has been linked to better social outcomes around health and well-being.

Reduced emissions and improved nature spaces will improve air quality and contribute to a health environment.

Access to good quality, healthy food

Action may fall out of this work to increase use of allotments in schools and the use of this food in school catering as well as creating community allotments and food growing spaces .

People's emotional and mental well-being

The strategy and action plan will aim to protect and restore existing nature spaces and create new ones.

Access to local green space has been linked to better social outcomes around health and well-being.

Carbon sequestration and biodiversity improvement work will involve volunteers. Volunteering and getting involved has been linked to increase sense of well being.

Access to healthcare

There may be a reduction in health related issues as people are outdoors (e.g. providing options for social prescribing)

Participation in leisure opportunities

Carbon sequestration and biodiversity improvement work will involve volunteers- an active leisure option.

The strategy will aim to protect and restore existing nature spaces and create new ones. This will aim to improve and offer more options for local green spaces for leisure.

Negative impacts identified:

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

Need to ensure any spaces for nature that are created are inclusive spaces and any anti social behaviour concerns designed out from the outset.

Access to good quality, healthy food

N/A

People's emotional and mental well-being

Need to endeavour to ensure spaces and views are protected that mean a lot to people. e.g. trees aren't planted which then block a cherished view.

There could be a negative impact on those required to work from home as a result in reduction of office space/ location. Due to digitalisation of services there could be a negative impact on wellbeing due to less physical/ face to face contact, increasing social isolation.

Access to healthcare

N/A

Participation in leisure opportunities

Access for leisure needs to be balanced with requirements for land management of the space for biodiversity improvement.

A more equal Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

There will be a positive influence in bringing about better outcomes for all people, particularly the young and those in poverty. New actions included as part of the targeted work to influence carbon reduction, sequestration, nature recovery and risk resilience across the county, will provide support and guidance communities.

Further actions required

It will be important to ensure effective communication and staff resource is provided to maximise on the influence the council can have in influencing carbon reduction and risk resilience, in particular, within communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Community funding opportunities and grants will need to be capitalised upon to finance identified projects and encourage action.

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

Enshrined in the ethos of the strategy is for DCC to make its contribution to reduce further climate change which will be damaging to the wellbeing of all people but particularly those young people who will need to live with climate change impacts the longest.

Enshrined in the strategy and action plan is taking a long term view.

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

N/A

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

The strategy includes supporting and influencing carbon reduction and area-wide risk resilience, which will particularly benefit those in fuel poverty in private rented/social housing/private owned homes.

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

The protection, restoration and creation of new green spaces in urban as well as rural locations will provide access to spaces for exercise and recreation. People in deprived areas will benefit from a reduction of travel and the conversion of miles into low carbon options will improve air quality and reduce congestion.

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

If more services are digitalised, consideration would need to be given to accessibility to mitigate any possible negative impact for those with disabilities.

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

N/A

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

Ensuring the funding and capacity is available to carry out area-wide carbon reduction influence and risk resilience planning.

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

N/A

A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The development of the strategy has involved the public from the outset via the emergency declaration to the public engagement period in early 2020 and strategy consultation in November/December 2020. There is an active group of c.93 members of the public who are engaged on this agenda with regular 2 way dialogue with DCC. Increasing low carbon travel options and the quality and quantity of green spaces will have a positive impact on the attractiveness of local areas, connected communities and rural resilience.

Most recently the 3 year strategy review has included a public engagement evening in November 2023 and a public consultation in May 2024, where feedback has been directly incorporated into the

revised strategy.

Further actions required

Need to ensure no one is left behind in the shift to digitalised services.

Positive impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

N/A

Community participation and resilience

Development of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy started in January with the public engagement period asking for the public's feedback on the Council's proposed net carbon zero and ecologically positive Council goals. Summary of the responses received can be accessed here:- <https://countyconversation.denbighshire.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/Public%20Engagement-%20Summary%20Report.pdf>.

The DCC Staff Council have been asked for their ideas.

Workshops with each service area took place in June, July and August to gather ideas and information for policies and projects within each service function to support the Council in becoming net carbon zero and ecologically positive by 2030.

The final draft Climate and Ecological Change Strategy went out for public consultation during November/December. Summary of the responses received can be accessed here:- <https://countyconversation.denbighshire.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/Public%20Consultation%20on%20Draft%20Summary%20Report.pdf>

Most recently, during the 3 year review, this process has been updated with staff service workshops taking place in September 2023, a public engagement event taking place in November 2023, a public consultation taking place in May 2024. The results of which are currently being reviewed and incorporated into the final revised strategy document.

The Council will continue to engage with the public proactively, constructively and sensitively on this

agenda being very clear on the scope and scale of the Council's targets. This will be via online discussion forums hosted by the Council on our County Conversation platform, email digests to the 'green mailing group' and an annual public event.

The attractiveness of the area

The strategy will target the protection, restoration and creation of 'green' spaces and the access to quality natural habitat across Denbighshire.

The strategy is about reducing carbon from business travel, staff commuting and fleet- reducing miles travelled and converting as many miles to low carbon which will reducing pollution, improve air quality and reduce congestion.

Connected communities

The strategy may lead to projects relating to low carbon travel, e.g. bus provision/cycle ways, car share schemes across the county to encourage people out of their cars.

Rural resilience

The strategy will target the protection, restoration and creation of 'green' spaces and the access to quality natural habitat across the whole of Denbighshire

Negative impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

N/A

Community participation and resilience

There is a risk of not meeting public expectation on this agenda, despite the scope of the strategy being amended in the 3 year review to include targeting reduction of the carbon emissions across the whole of Denbighshire as a county.

The attractiveness of the area

Need to ensure we have the capability and capacity to manage and maintain whatever we put

in/install/create to ensure attractiveness for the long term

Connected communities

Need to ensure the staff and councillors feel connected even if there is more home working.

Rural resilience

As the Council continues to channel shift delivery to more online and less physical, need to make sure that broadband infrastructure is sufficient in all areas of the county to support this. As well as addressing any other possible barriers e.g. access to services, digital skillset.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

Whilst Denbighshire's natural environment is a big contributor to the culture and heritage of the county, the strategy will not deliver direct deliberative action to generate a vibrant culture or a thriving Welsh language.

Further actions required

Ensure a good amount of time is provided to support welsh translation of any technical/specialist terminology documents.

Positive impacts identified:

People using Welsh

N/A

Promoting the Welsh language

All literature, signage, information boards will be provided in both Welsh and English.

Any public meetings will have bilingual slides and translator.

Consultation/ Online forums to be carried out bilingually.

Culture and heritage

Reducing the running cost of culture and heritage sites by reducing energy and fuel use will contribute to the financial viability of these sites/services.

Protecting and restoring nature's landmarks as part of this programme will support their availability for future generations.

Negative impacts identified:

People using Welsh

N/A

Promoting the Welsh language

Specialist terminology is sometimes difficult to translate.

Culture and heritage

Consideration needs to be given to what is and isn't permissible on buildings within conservation area.

A globally responsible Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

Our carbon footprint includes our supply chain and the strategy will target reduction of carbon emissions from our supply chain. This has the potential to stimulate local supply chains and provide

local benefit. The programme will also look to leverage environmental benefit at the community level via Community Benefits process which will include the supported delivery of carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancing projects. The delivery of the climate and ecological change programme will be done in collaboration with neighbouring authorities and partners, where possible. It is vital it is approached corporately across the authority.

Further actions required

Need to ensure the climate and ecological change strategy is understood by our partners and neighbouring authorities so opportunities for collaboration are identified and progressed. Build in time for collaboration.

Positive impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

The strategy will target reduction of carbon emissions from our supply chain. This will lead to the development of low carbon encouraging specification for goods and services which will include transportation from point of origin to us as the client. This has the potential to stimulate local supply chains and provide local benefit.

The programme will also look to leverage environmental benefit at the community level via Community Benefits process which will include the supported delivery of carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancing projects.

Human rights

N/A

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

The strategy will help support the Public Service Board (PSB) in the delivery of their "Environmental Resilience" goal.

The procurement service is a shared service with Flintshire County Council (FCC) and so work to decarbonise our supply chain can lead to more joint procurement and benefit in both counties.

The strategy and action plan will provide the narrative on which to seek external funding which we can do collaboratively across the region.

Reducing climate change

The strategy outlines where, what, how and when in terms of policy change, projects and activities needed for the Council to make its contribution to reducing carbon emissions and increasing carbon sequestration to prevent the problem of climate change getting any worse and to improve biodiversity to combat and prevent nature's decline.

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 by at least 95% 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".

Negative impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

The focus on local supply chain may mean spend on more national and international supply chains will reduce.

Human rights

N/A

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

Collaboration can sometimes slow progress initially but can lead to better outcomes. Need to programme in time for collaboration.

Reducing climate change

N/A