

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 28 th March 2023
Report Subject	Climate Change Programme Review
Cabinet Member	Collective Responsibility
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2019 the Welsh Government called for the Public Sector to become net zero carbon by 2030. Following this declaration, Cabinet resolved in December 2019 to a Climate Change Strategy which would set key aims and actions for creating a net zero carbon Council by 2030.

The Climate Change Strategy and action plan were adopted by Council in February 2022. The strategy detailed the commitment to provide an annual update on the Council's carbon emissions with consideration for further areas for development in achieving the net zero carbon goal.

Following the recently published progress report for the Climate Change programme, this report reviews the progress within the action plan and areas for action over 2023.

It also considers national updates since the adoption of the Strategy that need to be included within the strategy review in 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To agree areas of focus for 2023, and items that need to be included in 2024 strategy review.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REPORT
1.01	<p>Background: In 2019, the Welsh Government declared a Climate Emergency in Wales, accepting the recommendations from the United Kingdom (UK) Committee on Climate Change and further setting ambitious plans for the public sector to be net zero carbon by 2030. In December 2019 Cabinet resolved to develop a Climate Change Strategy which would set key aims and actions for creating a net zero carbon Council, and this strategy and action plan was adopted by Council in February 2022.</p>
1.02	<p>Purpose: The Climate Change Strategy and action plan were adopted by Council in February 2022. The strategy detailed the commitment to provide an annual update on the Council's carbon emissions with consideration for further areas for development in achieving the net zero carbon goal.</p> <p>Following the recently published progress report for the Climate Change programme, this report reviews the progress within the action plan and areas for action over 2023.</p> <p>It also considers national updates since the adoption of the Strategy that need to be included within the strategy review in 2024.</p>
1.03	<p>Actions for Prioritisation 2023 Appendix 1 'Climate Change Action Plan Progress 2022/23' gives detail into each action's progress, and current RAG status.</p> <p>Within this there are 1 action with Red status, 12 actions with Amber status, and 44 actions with Green status.</p> <p>The 'Red' action is CCP1 which refers to the need to review the procurement strategy to ensure carbon measures are embedded within the procurement process. This action has been delayed to fit into the work programme of the new role currently being recruited through Joint Procurement with Denbighshire County Council. It was included in the 2022/23 Council Plan and has been brought forward to the 2023/24 plan. Feedback has been given to the team on elements of carbon to be included in the strategy and this needs to be further developed once the new role has been appointed to.</p> <p>In Building theme the 'Amber' actions are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CCBu3 where a scoping exercise needs to be completed to assess improvements that have been made on building assets and what measures can still be made to further reduce emissions. This exercise will be completed collaboratively through Energy Unit, the approved MTFS post, and the Building and Assets teams.- CCBu7 & 8 (and CCL9) referring to flood investigation and alleviation and prioritisation of nature based solutions to mitigate flooding where possible. These activities are carried out on an ongoing basis, however the Council will be reviewing its Flood

	<p>Risk Management Strategy over 2023, which will encompass areas of recurrent flooding and SuDs.</p> <p>-</p> <p>In Mobility & Transport theme the ‘Amber’ actions are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CCM1 review of fleet policy with consideration for charging of vehicles. This policy review will set out the transition of fleet to low carbon alternatives. This plan has been delayed due to unexpected cost projections for the preferred transition plan. A further study is being developed over 2023 to assess the options available for effective transition of fleet. - CCM7 facilitating a car share forum for employees. This action was delayed due to the fallout from the pandemic, and is further complicated by the increase in hybrid working and therefore irregular journeys to and from office locations. A needs assessment should be developed to review practicality of such a scheme. - CCM8 refers to the existing salary sacrifice scheme and looking to increase participation. A review is needed of the current provision and barriers to employees taking up the scheme to identify where changes can be made to increase participation. - CCM9 refers to the launch of a salary sacrifice scheme for low emission vehicles. This scheme was postponed due to capacity needed on alternative projects and should be scheduled into the work plan as soon as practicable. - CCM11 refers to promotion of multi-modal transport journeys and strategic transport hubs. A review of current transport hubs is needed to support active travel connections. <p>In Land Use theme the ‘Amber’ actions are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CCL1 identifying current carbon storage capacity within Council assets. An internal mapping exercise has been taking place, however Welsh Local Government Association are developing a mapping tool for use of the public sector to effectively map carbon within land assets. This is due for launch during 2023 and will inform our more accurate carbon data reporting from land assets. - CCL6 & 7 refer to increasing tree canopy cover and assessing the impacts of ash dieback. Opportunities are being identified for further tree planting across the county in line with the ‘Flintshire Forest’ and an Ash dieback action plan is in place to replace canopy cover lost due to this disease.
1.04	<p>Based on the action plan progress and in order to maintain traction on ‘green’ actions, the following areas are suggested as priority for 2023-24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving data collection methodology for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement – introducing carbon reporting within contract specification, • Business mileage – improving the standard of data included in employee mileage claims, • Employee commuting / home working – carrying out an employee survey on employee commuting, • Water use – obtaining actual water usage data from utility companies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing carbon factors within our tendering processes – Supply chain accounts for 60% of our footprint and is affecting our overall progress so this needs particular attention. - Carbon Literacy training – roll out of training to key decision makers across the Council – Elected Members and Senior Managers. - Baselineing our buildings – what measures have already been made and what can we still do to reduce carbon emissions. - Baselineing our land – understanding the full benefit of our current land holdings – both with its current carbon absorption and areas where further projects may be suitable. - Approving our transition to Electric Vehicles in Fleet – Tying in improvements to the EV charging infrastructure with our transition of fleet vehicles. - Pilot new builds to NZC – First Net Zero Carbon school and Care Home. - Working with North Wales Economic Ambition Board - in development of our Local Area Energy Plan.
1.05	<p>National updates to be included in 2024 strategy review</p> <p>The Audit Wales report ‘Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030’, published in July 2022, makes five calls for action from public bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen your leadership and demonstrate your collective responsibility through effective collaboration - Clarify your strategic direction and increase your pace of implementation - Get to grips with the finances needed - Know your skills gaps and increase your capacity - Improve data quality and monitoring to support your decision making. <p>As a Council we have strengthened our leadership through a committed Cabinet Member for Climate Change, a formalised Climate Change Committee, and cross-departmental Officer working groups to demonstrate collective responsibility through collaboration. We are working with our public sector partners to better understand the finances associated with decarbonisation, and to share best practice with improved data quality. The Council must continue to increase the pace of implementation of carbon reduction projects and increased capacity where skills gaps exist by providing the necessary investment. This must be incorporated into the strategy review.</p> <p>In July 2022 Welsh Government also published their ‘Decarbonising Social Care in Wales’s report which highlights key actions needed by the public sector to better understand the carbon emissions from social care services and to ensure actions to decarbonise are included in strategic plans. The Council’s Climate Change Strategy already encompasses</p>

many aspects associated with social care, however, this will be reviewed as part of the strategy review in 2024/25. Within this review content and detail will be compared to the 'Social Care route map' to ensure this service area is effectively represented. From 2022/23, carbon emission submissions to Welsh Government will require a separate analysis of emissions from social care.

The methodology for the 2021/22 carbon emission data submission to Welsh Government was modified to incorporate the addition of new measures around Homeworking. The methodology used for calculating these emissions has a very high Relative Standard of Deviation due to necessary data being difficult to determine. In order to make this data meaningful and a true reflection of the carbon impacts from home working, we need to better understand the quantity of time our employees work from home. This data collection could be tied into the wider 'employee commuting' survey. Due to the disparity of data, and emissions from Homeworking not being included in our baseline figures, we have not included this in scope for our 2021/22 carbon emission data report.

With the addition of Homeworking emissions in 2021/22, and social care in 2022/23, the moving of reporting goalposts has potential to adversely affect the progress made in reducing our carbon emissions. It should be decided if any changes in methodology are to be included in future internal reporting or if the original baseline figures should be maintained. In December 2021, the Welsh Government committed to the development of regional energy strategies and Local Area Energy Plans in its approach to create a national energy plan by 2024. This exercise maps out future energy demand and supply for all parts of Wales to identify gaps and enable future planning.

The North Wales Energy Strategy & Action Plan has now been developed through a public sector working group and has been approved by the North Wales Economic Ambition Board. The strategy and action plan now needs to be endorsed by each Council, and implementation of this will be led by Ambition North Wales.

Ambition North Wales are also leading on the development of the Local Area Energy Plans and work with each Council will commence in 2023. The Planning is being funded by Welsh Government and the resulting Local Area Energy Plan will inform both local and national investment and decisions on future requirements for energy across all sectors. Both Regional and Local energy plans need to tie into related ambitions and actions within the Climate Change strategy.

Climate risk and adaptation is as crucial to Flintshire's community and the maintenance of delivery of Council services as climate mitigation and decarbonisation. Climate risk and adaptation has been touched on within the adopted strategy, however a full review of the risks and implications of a changing climate needs to be completed and tied into the strategy. This will ensure the Council is seeing the broader picture of climate change and not just decarbonisation.

1.06	<p>By working to achieve these goals Flintshire County Council can make its contribution to tackling the climate emergency and a net zero Wales by 2050 as detailed in Climate Change (Wales) Regulations 2021. Furthermore, achieving the Council's own well-being goals and those within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. As climate change and the environment are intrinsically linked the Council will also deliver on its statutory duties within Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to maintain and enhance biodiversity.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Both revenue and capital needs will be assessed as and when through the business case process.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT					
3.01	<p>There will be significant reputational risk if the County Council is not seen to take a leadership role in moving towards net zero carbon. Financial risk will be assessed on a project-by-project basis but lack of availability of internal and external funding will reduce the action that can be taken.</p>					
3.02	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="322 1133 1388 2067"> <tr> <td data-bbox="322 1133 743 1794">Long-term</td> <td data-bbox="743 1133 1388 1794"> <p>Positive: Decarbonisation of the Council's activities and services will require long term planning and a long term vision to ensure systems and services are fit for purpose as the climate changes as well as reducing the impact of harmful climate change through mitigation. Decarbonisation activities such as planting trees and developing renewable energy will have long lasting impacts over tens to hundreds of years. These activities also contribute to the climate change targets set by Welsh Government particularly Wales generating 70% of its electricity demand from renewable energy by 2030 and becoming a net zero carbon nation by 2050.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="322 1794 743 2067">Prevention</td> <td data-bbox="743 1794 1388 2067"> <p>Positive: In order to avoid the harmful effects of climate change it is necessary for the Council to reduce its carbon emissions and increase the amount of carbon sequestered in its land assets. Carbon emissions caused by human activities are the main cause of climate change.</p> </td> </tr> </table>		Long-term	<p>Positive: Decarbonisation of the Council's activities and services will require long term planning and a long term vision to ensure systems and services are fit for purpose as the climate changes as well as reducing the impact of harmful climate change through mitigation. Decarbonisation activities such as planting trees and developing renewable energy will have long lasting impacts over tens to hundreds of years. These activities also contribute to the climate change targets set by Welsh Government particularly Wales generating 70% of its electricity demand from renewable energy by 2030 and becoming a net zero carbon nation by 2050.</p>	Prevention	<p>Positive: In order to avoid the harmful effects of climate change it is necessary for the Council to reduce its carbon emissions and increase the amount of carbon sequestered in its land assets. Carbon emissions caused by human activities are the main cause of climate change.</p>
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	<p>Mitigating climate change will help to reduce impacts such as extreme weather causing flooding / extreme heat, loss of wildlife and habitats, increased pests and diseases, etc. Adapting to the impacts of climate change now will improve sustainability of our communities as the climate changes.</p>
Integration	<p>Positive: Becoming net zero carbon integrates with the following priorities under the Council Plan; Green Council, Ambitious Council and Supportive Council. It integrates with the public service board objectives in the Environment priority of the Wellbeing Plan as well as the Smart Access to Energy project in the North Wales Growth Deal. It also integrates with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Welsh Government's decarbonisation of the public sector agenda.</p>
Collaboration	<p>Positive: The climate change programme offers multiple opportunities to work collaboratively both internally and externally – and this collaboration will determine the success of the programme. Collaboration with the following groups is needed to ensure decarbonisation is integrated into everything that the Council and the wider region does and plans for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welsh Government - Other public sector organisations such as local authorities, NRW, health boards, universities. - Private sector - Regional groups such as the North Wales Economic Ambition Board - Local Town and County Councillors - the local communities
Involvement	<p>Positive: If decarbonisation is to succeed and harmful climate change is to be avoided then everyone at a professional and personal level will need to be involved</p>
<p>Well-being Goals Impact</p>	
Prosperous Wales	<p>Positive: Reducing the Council's carbon emissions should enable strategic investment in projects and ways of working that could deliver savings or generate new</p>

		income streams, therefore supporting delivery of local services. It should also facilitate the development of the low carbon economy through infrastructure projects, sustained tree planting, land management etc which can support local businesses and communities.
	Resilient Wales	Positive: Decarbonisation of the Council's activities and services will promote resilience through actions such as: investment in renewable energy infrastructure which helps to reduce reliance on imports from across Europe and the World and the associated price fluctuations, and increasing ecological resilience through enhancing biodiversity particularly on land with low ecological value. By planning for climate change adaptation the Council's services and its communities will also be resilient.
	Healthier Wales	Positive: Decarbonisation requires a shift to active travel, investment in green infrastructure, support for local and sustainable food sources, and development of renewable energy which are likely to promote healthier lifestyles, improved wellbeing and reduced health impacts from poor air quality.
	More equal Wales	Neutral; No impact identified
	Cohesive Wales	Neutral; No impact identified
	Vibrant Wales	Neutral; No impact identified
	Globally responsible Wales	Positive: Reducing the Council's carbon emissions to net zero helps to mitigate climate change and therefore contributes to the achievement of Welsh Government, UK Government and international climate goals.
3.03	Not anticipated to be any negative anti-poverty, equalities or environmental impacts of the scheme.	
3.04	<p>The Council's Well-being Objectives</p> <p>Decarbonisation of the Council's activities will support the Green Council objective with a key impact of reducing carbon emissions mitigating climate change, for example, through the development of alternative and renewable energy production, promoting active travel, shifting to electric</p>	

	<p>fleet vehicles, engaging with the supply chain and promoting a low carbon economy through the goods and services purchased.</p> <p>It can also contribute towards the success of other Council Wellbeing objectives such as 'An Ambitious Council' and 'A Caring Council' through providing local job creation and apprenticeships and therefore potentially reducing poverty through maximising residents' income and employability.</p>
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	N/A

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Climate Change Action Plan progress 2022/23.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Alex Ellis – Programme Manager Telephone: 01352 703110 E-mail: alex.ellis@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Capital Funding: Capital funding is usually utilised to acquire or improve a long-term asset such as equipment or buildings.</p> <p>Carbon emissions: Used interchangeably with greenhouse gas emissions; meaning emissions of carbon dioxide, methane etc from human and natural activities and sources. Wider greenhouse gas emissions are collectively calculated into a 'carbon dioxide equivalent' displayed as CO₂e.</p> <p>Carbon sequestration: the process involved in carbon capture and the long term storage of atmospheric carbon dioxide.</p> <p>Decarbonisation: Reducing and ultimately eliminating carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>EV: Electric Vehicle</p>

Net Zero Carbon: Balancing carbon emissions with carbon removal or simply eliminating carbon emissions altogether.

Revenue Funding: is utilised for items that will be used within a year. Examples include salaries, heating, lighting, services and small items of equipment. Routine repairs are revenue expenditures and can include significant repairs that do not extend the life of the asset or do not improve the asset.