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To: Cllr David Evans (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Mel Buckley, Chris Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, Ian Hodge, Ray Hughes, Richard Lloyd, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Dan Rose and Roy Wakelam

9 November 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF HYBRID MEETING
ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER, 2022 at 10.00 AM

Yours faithfully

Steven Goodrum
Democratic Services Manager

Please note: Attendance at this meeting is either in person in the Council Chamber, Flintshire County Council, County Hall, Mold, Flintshire or on a virtual basis.

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. The live streaming will stop when any confidential items are considered. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team on 01352 702345.

A G E N D A

1 **APOLOGIES**

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING** (Pages 5 - 16)

Report of Environment and Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator -

Purpose: To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.

4 **HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE VEHICLE PERMIT POLICY** (Pages 17 - 62)

Report of Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy

Purpose: To review the current household recycling centre (HRC) operations and vehicle permit criteria.

5 **ASH DIEBACK UPDATE** (Pages 63 - 70)

Report of Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) - Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

Purpose: To update members on how Flintshire County Council has confronted ash dieback in 2021/22 in line with the Ash Dieback Action Plan, it also reports on progress following an internal audit in July 2021

6   BIODIVERSITY SECT.6 REPORTING (Pages 71 - 118)

Report of Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) - Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

Purpose: To update members on work to deliver the Environment Act Section 6 Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan in order to report on action to Welsh Government.

7   LEVELLING UP FUND (Pages 119 - 128)

Report of Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) - Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

Purpose: To provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update on the development of the programme and projects and to recommend approval by Cabinet of capital funding to meet the required match funding expected by UK Government.

8   SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (Pages 129 - 138)

Report of Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) - Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

Purpose: To provide an update on the development of the programme and to recommend to Cabinet that approval is given for the framework of priorities and processes needed to effectively operate the programme.

Please note that there may be a 10 minute adjournment of this meeting if it lasts longer than two hours

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ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 15 November 2022
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
Report Author	Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work programme of the Committee of which they are Members. By reviewing and prioritising the Forward Work Programme Members are able to ensure it is Member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

The Committee is asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Forward Work Programme for the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The report also shows actions arising from previous meetings of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the progress made in completing them. Any outstanding actions will be continued to be reported to the Committee as shown in Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme and approve/amend as necessary.
2	That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.
3	That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	**EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING**
1.01	Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows: 1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives? 2. Is it an area of major change or risk? 3. Are there issues of concern in performance? 4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation? 5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit? 6. Is the issue of public or Member concern?
1.03	In previous meetings, requests for information, reports or actions have been made. These have been summarised as action points. Following a meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2018, it was recognised that there was a need to formalise such reporting back to Overview & Scrutiny Committees, as 'Matters Arising' was not an item which can feature on an agenda.
1.04	It was suggested that the 'Action tracking' approach be trialled for the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Following a successful trial, it was agreed to extend the approach to all Overview & Scrutiny Committees.
1.05	The Action Tracking details including an update on progress is attached at Appendix 2.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	**IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT**
3.01	In some cases, action owners have been contacted to provide an update on their actions.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Forward Work Programme Appendix 2 – Action Tracking for the Environment & Economy OSC.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee as identified in Appendix 2. **Contact Officer:** Margaret Parry-Jones Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator **Telephone:** 01352 702427 **E-mail:** Margaret.parry-jones@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Improvement Plan: the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan.

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Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2022/23

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
15 Nov 2022 **10.00 am**	. Biodiversity Sect.6 Reporting	To receive a report on Biodiversity to include details of the new requirements of the Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty	Awareness raising	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	
	Household Recycling Centre Vehicle Permit Policy	To review the current household recycling centre (HRC) operations and vehicle permit criteria	Policy review	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
		To receive an update	Awareness	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	
	Shared Prosperity Fund	To receive an update		Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	
	Levelling Up Fund			Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	
	Ash Die Back			Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
APPENDIX 1

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
13 Dec 2022 **10.00 am**	Wepre Park Management plan Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO's) review	To receive a report outlining the management plan. To review the current PSPO's prior to consideration by Cabinet.	Pre-decision scrutiny Policy review	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
	Council Plan 2022-23 Mid-Year Performance Reporting	To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities and performance levels identified in the Council Plan.	Performance monitoring	Chief Officers	
	MTFS & Budget Setting 23-24	That the Committee reviews and comments on the Planning Environment & Economy and Streetscene & Transportation cost pressures and overall budget strategy and advises on any areas of cost efficiency it would like to see explored further.	Consultation	Chief Officers	

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
	Communities for Work	To update the Committee on the work of the employability programmes and on the closure of the Communities 4 Work programme and any implications for the Council arising.	Assurance	Niall Waller	
	Housing regeneration grants & loans policy	To consider the draft refreshed Housing Regeneration Grants and Loans Policy and to recommend approval to Cabinet.	Pre-decision scrutiny	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	
10 Jan 2023 10.00 am	Memorials/Legacy in the Countryside Policy	To receive an update		Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
	Streetscene Standards	The Streetscene Standards have not been reviewed since 2019. This report will review the existing standards and recommend amendments to ensure that the service continues to deliver to the needs and expectations of the public.	Policy review	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
	Grass Cutting Policy	To advise Scrutiny of the revised Grass Cutting Policy	Policy Review	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
APPENDIX 1

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
	Waste Strategy	To review the Councils current Waste Strategy with the objective of achieving Welsh Government statutory recycling targets	Policy Review	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
7 Feb 2023 **10.00 am**	Woodland Strategy Presentation by Land & Property Programme Manager – NWEAB – to be confirmed	To receive a progress report. To receive an update on the Land & Property Programme	Assurance	Tom Woodall	
7 March 2023 **10.00 am**	Local Toilet Strategy Bereavement Services	To advise the committee on the approach and timescales for the statutory formal review of the Local Toilet Strategy To advise the committee on the services provided and challenges faced.	Pre-decision scrutiny Assurance	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
18 April 2023 **10.00 am**	Highways Drainage	To receive an update	Assurance	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
APPENDIX 1

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
16 May 2023 **10.00 am**	NWEAB Low carbon Energy (to be confirmed)				
13 June 2023 **10.00 am**					
11 July 2023 **10.00 am**	Council Plan 2022-23 Year-End Performance	To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities and performance levels identified in the Council Plan.	Performance monitoring	Chief Officers	

Items to be added: -

 Welsh Government Deposit Return scheme

October 2023 - Progress on the implementation of the conversion of the FCC fleet to electric and alternative fuels.

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Action tracking from Environment & Economy OSC October 2022

Item/Date	Discussion	Action	By whom	Status
Performance Report 08/06/21	The Chief Officer agreed to share results of the network review by Transport for Wales	The Bus Network Review undertaken by Transport for Wales (TfW) is currently ongoing and has yet to be concluded. An update is awaited from TfW. 06/09/22	Anthony Stanford	Timescale awaited.
Town Centre Markets 06/07/21	That consideration be given to starting a market at Flint & Buckley	Interim response provided. Outcome to be shared with the Committee when available Email update circulated 1/2/22 An update note will be circulated shortly which will contain a formal response to the questions asked by Scrutiny members on the Buckley / Flint markets idea. 03/10/22	Niall Waller	Timescale awaited.
Minutes 14/09/21	Litter from food outlets	Update on Welsh Government initiative to be circulated when available	Gabby Povey	Awaiting on current position from WG

				Timescale awaited.
End of Year Performance Monitoring Report 5 July 22	Check your bin day unavailable and Information on My Account incorrect.	Situation should be resolved soon. The system is still unavailable. Discussions are taking place with the systems administrator on providing a solution. Should be resolved within the next month. 27/9/22 Update circulated via email 7/11/22	Ruth Tulley	Ongoing
Forward Work Programme	Parking outside schools	Joint meeting to be held with Education, Youth & Culture OSC to progress	Ceri Shotton	Ongoing
	Highways Drainage	To be added to Forward Work Programme	Facilitator	Completed
	Bereavement Services	To be added to Forward Work Programme	Facilitator	Completed
	Progress on the implementation of the conversion of the FCC fleet to electric and alternative fuels.	To be added to Forward Work Programme	Facilitator	Completed

CYNGOR Sir y Fflint Flintshire COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 15 November 2022
Report Subject	Review of Vehicle Permit Criteria for Household Recycling Centres
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Regional Transport Strategy
Report Author	Chief Officer, Streetscene and Transportation
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2021, following two all-member seminars, a number of recommendations were presented to Cabinet on changes to be made to the current waste strategy in order for the Council to achieve 70% recycling by 2024-2025.

One recommendation within that report was to review the Household Recycling Centre (HRC) vehicle permit criteria in order to make it clearer to service users what types and sizes of vehicles should or should not be issued a permit and to ensure that traders did not take advantage of the system.

The recommendations were approved by Cabinet; however, a further report was requested to give further clarity on what the changes would be and how those changes would be implemented and communicated to service users. Subsequently, a further report was presented to Cabinet in January 2022 proposing a revised vehicle permit policy with details of how it would be implemented. The revised policy was approved and subsequently implemented in April 2022.

Post implementation and in response to a small number of complaints received from residents who were no longer permitted to access the HRCs with their vehicles, a commitment was given to undertake a review of the policy to ensure that that it met the original objectives set out and review whether the criteria needed further amendment.

This report provides an overview of the impact of the revised policy along with details of the review undertaken and proposals for amending the policy. Further considerations also are presented on the broader operations for HRCs with a view to introducing further service improvements and efficiencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee supports the review undertaken and endorses the proposed amendments to the Vehicle Permit Policy for Household Recycling Centres.

2	That the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee supports and endorses the inclusion of tyres as an additional waste stream in the HRC booking system in order to ensure waste minimisation and control.
3	That the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee supports and endorses the additional proposals to improve HRC operational controls and services.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	**Explaining the background for the vehicle permit policy review and presenting further considerations to improve Household Recycling Centre operations**
1.01	In September 2021, following two all-member seminars, a number of recommendations were presented to Cabinet on changes to be made to the current waste strategy in order for the Council to achieve 70% recycling by 2024-2025. The Council's waste strategy is to re-use, recycle and compost as much recoverable waste as is practicable at our Household Recycling Centres (HRCs), which is in line with the Welsh Government Blueprint. One of the recommendations made was to revisit the current household recycling centre (HRC) vehicle permit scheme criteria. At the seminars, Members had expressed their concerns that the current vehicle permit criteria was not clear enough and could be left to interpretation, which could create confusion for service users. It had also been highlighted by our HRC staff that the existing permitting system unintentionally allowed traders and commercial businesses to exploit the system and bring in trade waste streams, which we are not permitted to accept. When questioned or challenged by our staff, some of these customers became abusive and violent leading to unpleasant working environments.
1.02	In a report presented to Cabinet, it was proposed that the vehicle permitting criteria should be reviewed in order to make it clearer to service users what types and sizes of vehicles should or should not be issued a permit and to ensure that traders did not take advantage of the system. It was also proposed that some flexibility be allowed for those vehicles that are registered to a business to be allowed access to deliver waste if it is clear that the waste has not been produced by that company or emanates from the activities of that business. For example, allow a vehicle registered to a plumber to dispose of household garden waste.
1.03	Following consultation with elected members and with site operational staff, back office support staff and management, a further report was presented to Cabinet in January 2022 providing comprehensive detail on what the revised vehicle permit policy would be and how it would be implemented. The revised policy was approved and subsequently implemented in April 2022. Prior to introducing the policy a communications plan was developed to ensure that all services users were made aware of the proposed changes and could make their application for a permit in a timely manner.

	The communications plan included, but was not limited to, updated website information, social media and Gov delivery campaigns, briefings to members, as well as posters and leaflets distributed at all HRC sites.
1.04	Since March 2022 almost 2,000 applications for a vehicle permit have been received by the service. Of those, fewer than 300 applications have been refused due to the vehicle not complying with the new policy.

Approximately 100 residents subsequently appealed the refusal; however only several of those appeals have been successful.

The table below details the main reasons for permits being refused and some applicants were refused due to not satisfying multiple criteria: -

Reason for Permit Refusal	Nos.
Vehicle Oversized (Height/LWB)	69
Documents provided did not match (different addresses)	61
Vehicle registered to a business	45
Vehicle is used for business/trade purposes	46
The trailer has caged sides / boxed trailer	42
The trailer is over 2m in length	24
The vehicle is sign written	12
The applicant is not a Flintshire resident	1
The documents provided were not current (over 12 months old)	1
The applicant's driving licence had expired*	2

Note: whilst two applicants have been refused a permit due to expired driving licences, almost 20% of applications were initially received with an expired driving licence as evidence. The assessment team responded to the applicants to inform them, at which time they renewed and resubmitted the document. |
| 1.05 | For those small number of applicants who were not eligible for a permit, it has created a negative response to the service with many local members and MPs/MSs contacting officers to request that the policy be relaxed.

In response to this, the Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Regional Transport Strategy committed to undertake a review of the policy so that members could provide officers with their constituent's feedback or concerns. As a result, two all member workshops were held on 26th September 2022 in a hybrid format. |
| 1.06 | The workshops were well attended with approximately 30 members present over the two sessions. To enable an inclusive and comprehensive review, the workshops were attended by officers from across the service, such as HRC site staff, supervisors, enforcement officers and recycling, data and compliance officers.

To ensure that maximum benefit was achieved at the workshops, the review was extended to include the wider HRC site operations with a view to introducing further service improvements and efficiencies, and maximising the opportunities for recycling. Details of the content of those workshops are shown in **Appendix 1.** |

	The workshops were delivered in two parts; firstly a presentation provided by officers to give an overview of HRC operations, background legislation, policy and procedures, as well as an update on the impact of the vehicle permit policy following its implementation in April 2022.

The second part allowed members to provide their feedback on the vehicle permit policy and experiences from residents, ask questions and offer suggestions for increasing recycling levels at the HRCs and improving operations. A copy of the slide deck presented to members at the workshop is detailed in **Appendix 2.**

Additionally, members were invited to complete feedback forms following the workshops with any further comments that they may have wished to register. |
| 1.07 | **Vehicle Permit Policy Review**
Following evaluation of the feedback provided at the workshops and subsequent feedback forms following conclusion of the session, the following proposals are presented for consideration: -

Appendix 3 details the comments received by members, the associated considerations to be reviewed and, following appraisal of the advantages and disadvantages of those considerations, a proposed outcome for each comment.

The proposed outcomes have been written into a revised policy document for consideration. The amendments and new clauses for inclusion in the policy have been highlighted in red text for ease of review - please see **Appendix 4**.

If the proposed amendments to the vehicle permit policy were to be adopted, all the refused permit applications and appeals would be reassessed for eligibility against the revised criteria. |
| 1.08 | **Booking System**
At the workshops, members acknowledged the benefits of the booking system; however, it was highlighted that the provision required improved publicity, as not all residents were aware of the process.

As a result, it is proposed that another promotional campaign will be undertaken and improved signage at the HRC sites will be implemented to raise awareness.

Due to the success of the booking system in ensuring that container availability is maintained, it is also proposed that tyres will be added to the waste streams requiring pre-booking. **Appendix 5** details the proposed criteria for tyre disposal. |
| 1.09 | **Charging for Disposal of Waste - Trader/Charities**
It is becoming more common for local authorities to charge for the disposal of bulky/heavy waste items received at HRC sites, such as wood or soil and rubble. Not all members supported this proposal, and others supported the provision of a chargeable service for the disposal of waste by businesses and trades. It is proposed that the options for charging should be explored further to establish the cost and benefit of providing such a service, whilst taking into account any legislative requirements. A further report will be presented to the Committee once this has taken place. |

1.10	**Alternative Opening Hours** Currently, all five HRCs open between the hours of 9am and 5pm seven days a week. It has been acknowledged that these opening times can be quite restrictive, especially for those residents who work during these hours. Members were generally supportive of extending opening times to allow for more opportunity for residents to attend site at more convenient times. To facilitate this there would be a requirement to adjust the site operatives working times from a 7.4-hour day, five day working pattern, to a 9.25 hour day, four day working pattern (over 7 days). Options are being explored to extend the opening times e.g. 8am-5.30pm; however, this will be subject to consultation with the trade unions and workforce, and the decision to move to a revised shift pattern and a longer working day will need to be reviewed in light of existing and future budgets and resources.
1.11	**Bagging and Charging for Soil Conditioner** Members commented that charging for soil conditioner produced from the composting of the Council's collected garden waste would only be possible if the quality of the product was of a high standard and if the charge did not eliminate competition in the market for local businesses.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	ICT services support and assistance will be required to expand the back office booking system.
2.02	It is likely that an extension to the opening times of HRC sites will require additional resources and this will need to be assessed in light of available budgets and the medium term financial strategy.

3.00	**IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT**
3.01	**Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact**

Long-term	The proposals will drive improvements to recycling performance and achieving a Circular Economy.
Prevention	The proposals will help prevent the unauthorised disposal of waste and recyclable materials
Integration	No impact
Collaboration	No impact
Involvement	Improved engagement with Flintshire business to ensure they understand their legislative responsibilities

	Well-being Goals Impact	
	Prosperous Wales	Positive – improving reuse and recycling of recycling materials resulting in world leaders in recycling performance
	Resilient Wales	Positive – Less demand for raw materials, promoting circular economy
	Healthier Wales	Positive – reducing vehicle movements and emissions and allowing for the responsible management of controlled waste
	More equal Wales	No impact
	Cohesive Wales	No impact
	Vibrant Wales	Positive – Promoting reuse and recycling of waste, and working towards carbon reduction
	Globally responsible Wales	Reducing the reliance on the extraction of raw materials and destruction of natural habitats and ecosystems by the reprocessing of recyclable materials.

3.02	The vehicle permit scheme can be a very emotive topic and any changes can result in negative feedback from service users. A clear communications plan will be developed to control the distribution of any revisions to policy, including improved on site signage.
3.03	If revisions to policy are adopted, previously refused applications and appeals will be reassessed for eligibility against the new scheme criteria.
3.04	The level of abuse and threats of violence to HRC staff has been highlighted previously and raised as an ongoing concern for some time. The site staff will soon be presented with new body worn CCTV cameras to wear for recording and reporting any incidents.
3.05	Providing and retaining a clear and well-defined permit criteria will support the site staff in managing non-conforming waste arriving at the site.
3.06	Control of the vehicles utilising the sites will allow for better, easier access for Flintshire residents as large vehicles, which can take up to an hour to off-load their waste, will be prohibited.
3.07	The booking system will notify residents when there is container availability so that they do not bring their waste to site when containers are full and avoid wasted journeys.
3.08	The risk to the authority is reduced by eliminating trade vehicles from the sites, as the current Environmental Permit does not allow for trade waste to be accepted at HRCs. It also eliminates the risk of rogue traders, who should not be transporting commercial waste without a valid waste carriers licence, waste transfer note or waste permit.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Regional Transport Strategy

4.02	Two all member seminars held on 26 September 2022	
4.03	Streetscene workforce and waste strategy team	
4.04	Trade Unions	

5.00	**APPENDICES**
5.01	**Appendix 1** – Workshop Agenda
5.02	**Appendix 2** – Workshop Presentation
5.03	**Appendix 3** – Members Comments and Policy Recommendations
5.04	**Appendix 4** – vehicle Permit Policy Suggested Revisions
5.05	**Appendix 5** – Booking Criteria for Tyres

6.00	**LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**
6.01	Target 70 A Review of Flintshire County Councils Waste Strategy.pdf
6.02	Household Recycling Centre Vehicle Permit Criteria

7.00	**CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS**
7.01	**Contact Officer:** Ruth Tulley, Regulatory Services Manager **Telephone:** 01352 704796 **E-mail:** ruth.tulley@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
8.01	**Household waste** and non-household waste are defined in the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012.

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Appendix 1

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Streetscene and Transportation Portfolio

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All Member's Workshop – Household Recycling Centres, Target 70 (2022)

Welcome – Chair of Scrutiny / Cabinet Member)

- o Introductions
    - o Context and Background

- o Where are we now

    - o HRC Operations
        - ▪ Sites and locations
        - ▪ Permits and Legislation
        - ▪ Household and Business Duty of Care
        - ▪ What we collect and what happens to the recycling and waste
        - ▪ Deconstruction operation

    - o HRC Recycling Performance
        - ▪ National Strategy and Policy (now and future)
        - ▪ Targets and statistics
        - ▪ Impact of missing targets (financial)

    - o Funding Investments
        - ▪ HRC re-development
        - ▪ Greenfield
        - ▪ Repair/Reuse Initiatives
        - ▪ Future funding application requirements

    - o Vehicle Permit Policy Update
        - ▪ Policy change overview
        - ▪ Permit applications to date
        - ▪ Impact on waste tonnage and cost
        - ▪ Impact on abusive behaviours
        - ▪ Impact on fly tipping

    - o Policy Review
        - ▪ Vehicle permit policy
        - ▪ Booking system for waste streams
        - ▪ Charging for disposal of C/I waste for residents
        - ▪ Trader/charities tipping on site
        - ▪ Extended opening hours
        - ▪ Bagging and charging for soil conditioner

- o Breakout Session / feedback

- o Next Steps

- o Close out and thank you

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Household Recycling Centre Operations and Vehicle Permit Criteria Workshop

26 September 2022

Agenda

- Introductions / Purpose of Workshop

- Context / Background

- Where are we now?

  - HRC Operations

  - HRC Recycling Performance

  - Funding Investments

  - Vehicle Permit Policy Update

  - Policy Review

- Breakout Session / Feedback

- Next Steps

Context / Background

- The council's waste and recycling services are highly valued by local members and the wider community.

- Any changes made to these services have wide reaching impacts and can receive substantial interest and challenge.

- In the last 12 years we have moved from a backdoor collection service to a modern, controlled kerbside collection service with the emphasis on recycling.

- We have reduced, modified and upgraded our household recycling centres (HRCs) to improve the customer experience and maximise the services offered.

- Largely driven by Welsh Government (WG) Statutory Recycling Targets and the possibility of infraction fines if we do not achieve them i.e. 70% by 2024/2025

- The percentage of our total waste arisings recycled, composted or re-used increased to 69.16% in 2018/2019

CYNGOR
Sir y Fflint
Flintshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Context / Background

- However, since the pandemic in 2020, we are seeing a year on year decease in performance irrespective of the improvements made to our services.

- Over the last five years, we have reviewed our waste strategy three times, with the most recent review being the 'Target 70' campaign in July 2021.

- These reviews have allowed us to implement changes which have attributed to improving the way we deliver our household recycling centre services.

- In April 2022 a revised Vehicle Permit Policy and booking system was introduced to improve vehicular access and control and to reduce illegal trade waste disposal and address the verbal and physical abuse that staff were receiving at our HRC sites.

- Now that the new policy is embedded, a review of its effectiveness is required along with a wider review of HRC operations to ensure that they continue to positively contribute to the overall recycling performance.

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Flintshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Household Recycling Centre Overview

There are five HRCs located across the County

- ❖ Buckley
- ❖ Greenfield
- ❖ Nercwys (Mold)
- ❖ Rockcliffe (Oakenholt)
- ❖ Sandycroft

Only small amounts of domestic household waste can be taken to a HRC site under the constraints set out in the Environment Permit. Business and trade waste is not permitted. The types of household waste accepted on site include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Wood
- ✓ Garden waste
- ✓ Soils/Rubble
- ✓ Scrap Metal
- ✓ Cardboard
- ✓ Electrical items
- ✓ Plastic
- ✓ Glass
- ✓ Textiles

- ✓ Tyres
- ✓ Plasterboard
- ✓ Mattresses and Carpets
- ✓ Paints
- ✓ Certain hazardous waste
- ✓ Non-recyclable wastes

All waste collected and handled by the Local Authority has to be reported through a national reporting tool called WasteDataFlow.

Where all our recycling and waste ends up can be viewed on the website:
https://myrecyclingwales.org.uk/

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Environmental Permitting

- All HRC sites are regulated by Natural Resources Wales under an Environmental Permit.

- An environmental permit sets out specific conditions on how a waste operation (Landfill Site, Transfer Station, Household Recycling Centre) must be carried out.

- The conditions include:
  - what type of waste can be taken to the site,
  - limits on the amount of waste that can be accepted and stored,
  - measures that need to be put in place to control site operations (drainage, security, odour, litter)

- The purpose of an Environmental Permit is to ensure protection of the natural environment.

- Our HRCs are routinely visited by NRW who undertake inspections to ensure we are operating compliantly with the regulations

- Data on how much waste is collected, where it has come from as well as where it is disposed of is provided to NRW Quarterly via waste returns.

- Any breaches of the permit could lead to a fine or imprisonment, dependant on the severity of the non-conformance.

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Waste Duty of Care Requirements

When disposing of waste both residents and business have to comply with Duty of Care as set out in the Environmental Protection Act, Section 34. The following requirements must be met with any noncompliance possibly resulting in prosecution.

Business Waste

- ✓ Have a compliant waste contract in place
- ✓ Check person taking the waste is a registered waste carrier
- ✓ Complete a Waste transfer note recording the waste type, who took it and where is has been disposed of
- ✓ If transporting the waste obtain a waste carriers licence and take the waste to a licenced site

Household Waste

- ✓ Check person taking the waste is a registered waste carrier
- ✓ Record the business name
- ✓ Record the type and registration of the vehicle
- ✓ Record the date the waste was taken
- ✓ ALWAYS ask where the waste is going to
- ✓ Get a receipt

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Reuse, Repurpose, Repair and Deconstruction

As well as collecting waste for recycling or disposal, we aim to encourage our residents to reuse, repurpose or repair items instead of disposal to fulfil the waste hierarchy and deliver on a circular economy.

Some of the interventions we have taken to achieve this include:

- ➢ Bulky waste collection service
- ➢ Reusable nappies scheme
- ➢ Discourage the use of single use items (plastic bottles, carrier bags)
- ➢ Have set-aside areas at the HRC where reusable items can be taken for resale or repurposing
- ➢ Provide repair, reuse and upcycling workshops
- ➢ Develop a "reuse for good" hub and partner with charities*
- ➢ Trial a doorstep collection service for textile items*
- ➢ Where an item cannot be reused they are deconstructed into their component parts which are then recycled.

*Both initiatives subject to a funding application

Prevention

Preparing for re-use

Recycling

Other recovery

Disposal

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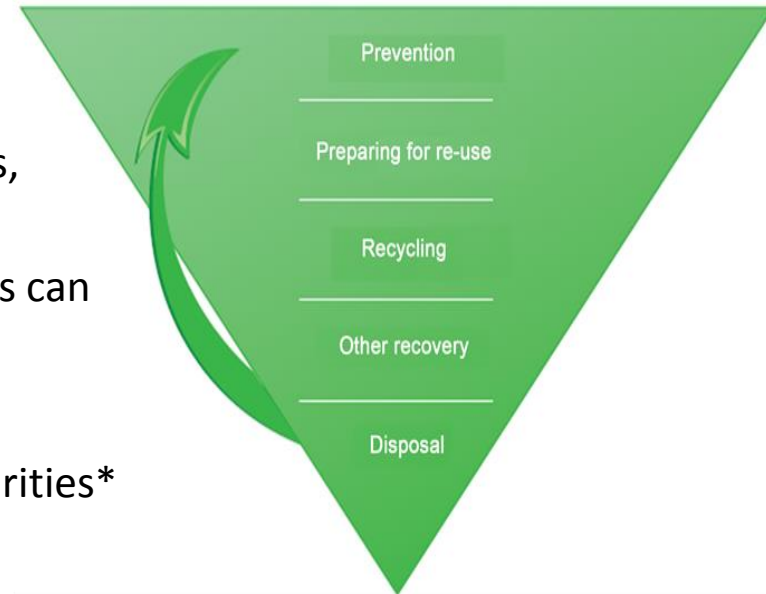
Polices, Legislation, Guidance & Changing Times

- Towards Zero Waste: Our Waste Strategy 2010
  - ➢ Municipal Waste Sector Plans, Collections Blueprint

- Recycling, Preparation for Re-use and Composting Targets (Monitoring and Penalties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

- Wales Waste Measure
  - ➢ Waste classification, Household/municipal waste

Environment (Wales) Act 2016

End Destinations
  - ➢ proximity principle , market stability, reporting regimes

- Wales Circular Economy – Beyond Recycling Strategy
  - ➢ Repair and reuse, carbon reduction

- Waste Compositional Analysis

- Grant funding applications for new initiatives

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Recycling Targets and Performance

Municipal Waste Collected by Local Authorities	2012-13	2012-13	2015-16	2019-20	2024-25
Minimum levels of preparing for reuse and recycling/composting (or AD) for municipal waste	40%	52%	58%	64%	**70%**

2018-2019 – almost had achieved 70% target at 69.16%

2019-2020 – Start of Covid-19 pandemic: 65.85%

2020-2021 - Covid-19 pandemic: 63.98%

2021-2022 – Covid-19 pandemic: 61%

2022-2023 (Q1) – Covid recovery: ??%

If we do not achieve the set target we could face fines of £200 per tonne of waste not recycled. For context, in 2020/21 we missed our target by just 17 tonnes which equated to a penalty of £3,400

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Funding Investment and Redevelopment

New and redeveloped HRCs to provide a modern and safe environment

Improved welfare facilities for staff

New plant, machinery and equipment to deliver a safe and efficient operation

- Repair and Reuse Centre Buckley

- Community garden focusing on sustainability

- "Reuse for good" Hub

- Doorstep recycling collection service

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Vehicle Permit Policy – Need for Change

- In September 2021, following two all-member seminars held in July 2021, a number of recommendations were presented to Cabinet on proposed changes to the current waste strategy to ensure that the Council achieves the 70% target by 2024/2025.

- One of the recommendations made was to revisit the current Household Recycling Centre (HRC) vehicle permit scheme criteria.

- At the seminars, Members had expressed their concerns that the current vehicle permit criteria was not clear enough and could be left to interpretation, which can create confusion and ambiguity for service users and staff.

- It was also highlighted by our HRC staff that the permitting system unintentionally allowed traders and commercial businesses to exploit the system and bring in trade waste streams, which we are not permitted to accept.

- When questioned or challenged by our staff, some of these customers could become abusive and violent, leading to unpleasant working environments.

- A report was submitted to the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee in January 2022 and Cabinet approved a revised policy, which was implemented in April 2022.

- At this time, a booking system for mattresses and asbestos was also introduced following further concerns that the containers for these materials were often full when customers arrived at site.

Vehicle Permit Policy – Key Changes April 2022

- All trailers, irrelevant of size now require a permit

- Size restrictions on vehicles and trailers that are eligible for a permit

- Trailers with extended and caged sides are not an approved vehicle

- Trailers are not permitted if towed by a vehicle requiring a permit (E.g. van)

- Permits are issued for one specific site only

- A 'one off permit' will be issued to a business vehicle, providing that the waste does not originate from the activities of that business

- A temporary permit to be issued to a hired vehicle allowing for up to three visits over a week during each calendar year

- All applications will be via an online application process

- If an applicant continually provides incorrect documentation then they will be refused a permit and not permitted to reapply for six months.

- An appeals process has been established should an application be refused.

- The policy details that abuse of the scheme will not be tolerated and that permits can be revoked for non-compliance

Vehicle Permit Policy – Vehicle Issues

Vehicle Permit Policy – Impact

Waste Tonnages and Saving						
	2019	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Difference 21-22**	£ Saving
Residual Waste (T)	2064	1588	2480	1813	-667	-£55,411
Soil & Rubble (T)	3317	2527	3696	1988	-1708	-£13,664
Plasterboard (T)	109	83	117	77	-40	-£3,988
Wood (T)	2035	1569	2131	1366	-765	-£22,184
Total	**7525**	**5768**	**8424**	**5244**	**-3180**	**-£95,247**

Waste Tonnages

86%
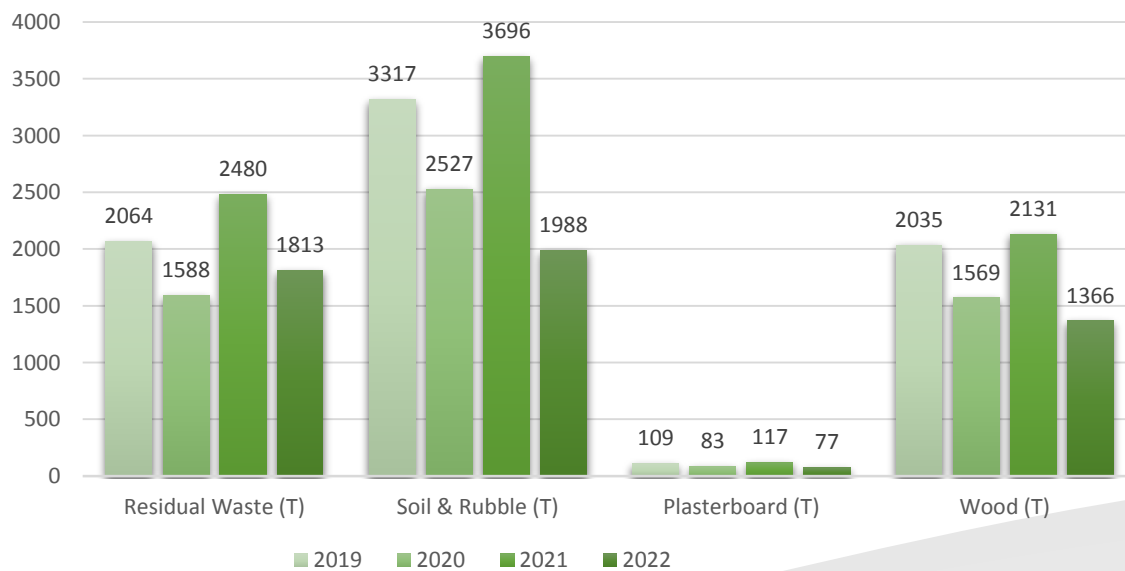
Vehicle Permit Policy – Impact

Application Statistics

Permit Applications	1992
Permits Issued	1766
Permits Refused	266
Appeals Received	106
Appeals Upheld	6

Reported Incidents of Violence and Aggression

Month	2019	2020	2021	2022
April	4	X	3	1
May	4	X	1	0
June	0	X	1	1
July	2	0	0	0
August	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	**11**	**0**	**5**	**2**

Fly Tip Data

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Reported Fly Tip Events	287	540	262	423
Fly Tip Waste (T)	21	16	44	19

Fly TIpping

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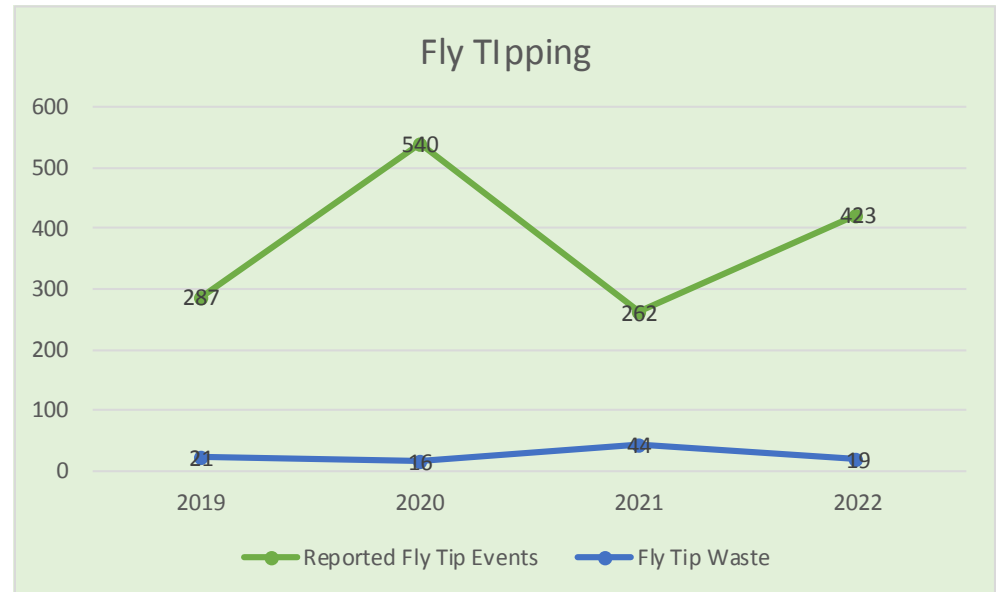
Discussion Session and Points for Consideration

- Vehicle permit policy

- Booking system for waste streams

- Charging for disposal of C/I waste for residents

- Trader/charities tipping on site

- Extended opening hours

- Bagging and charging for soil conditioner

- Any other considerations

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Next Steps

- Collate all feedback / create FAQs

- Review feedback

- Identify any operational and policy changes

- Report to E&EOSC in November for scrutiny

- Present to Cabinet in November for consideration

Thank You

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Vehicle Permit Policy Review November 2022
Household Recycling centres (HRCs)

Members Comment	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages	Proposed outcome of considerations
The application process is too complicated with too many documents required	Remove the amount of documents required at the application phase	The application process is simpler for the resident.	There would be no control measure in place to identify if a vehicle complies with the policy and terms and conditions. Increase conflict on the HRC should a non-compliant vehicle obtain a vehicle permit	Reduce the number of documents and photographs required to make an application.
Providing photographs of the vehicle at application phase is unnecessary	Remove the need to provide photographs at the application phase. Have vehicles checked for compliance at the HRC instead of via photographs	The application process is simpler for the resident.	There would be no control measure in place to identify if a vehicle complies with the policy and terms and conditions. Increase conflict on the HRC should a non-compliant vehicle obtain a vehicle permit	Retain the requirement to provide photographs as this would ensure that vehicles are compliant to policy.
There should no requirement to reapply for a permit on an annual basis	Automatically re-issue a vehicle permit every year without a need for re-application by the resident.	The resident would not be inconvenienced by resubmitting the same or similar documents year on year.	There would be no control measure in place to identify if a vehicle complies with the policy and terms and conditions. It is possible that vehicles could be altered or have signage added, for example, one a permit is re-issued.	Retain the requirement for residents to make an annual application.
Clarity is needed on what to do if a resident changes their vehicle	Include information in the policy to guide residents on what to do if they change their vehicles	Improve information to prevent complaints or confusion.	None identified	Include instruction in the vehicle permit policy
Clarity is needed on what to do if a resident	Include information in the policy to guide residents on what to do if	Improve information to prevent complaints or confusion.	None identified	Include instruction in the vehicle permit policy

Appendix 3 - Members Comments and Policy Recommendations

loses their permit	they lose their permit			
Can permits be transferred/loaned to other vehicle users	Allow permit to be transferred/loaned to other vehicles	Vehicles that do not have a permit can access the HRC to dispose of waste	There would be no control measure in place to identify if the permit is passed to a nun-compliant vehicle Increase conflict on the HRC should a non-compliant vehicle obtain a vehicle permit	Retain the restriction on permits being transferred/loaned to other vehicle users
Can a resident loan a vehicle from a family member or friend to use at the HRC	Allow for compliant vehicle to be used if a family member form out of County offer to assist with waste disposal needs	Residents can make use of vans or trailers owned by family or friends to reduce cost of hiring vehicles to dispose of bulky waste	The system could be exploited by businesses working in the area, from out of County, to dispose of trade waste	Allow a one off permit to be issues for a vehicle loaned from family or friends following a controlled application process.
Trailers in excess of 2 meters should be granted a permit	Allow trailers in excess of the current 2m length restriction to be granted a permit	Residents who have already bought a long trailer will have access to the HRC to dispose of waste Residents with large gardens/undertaking home improvements have to make multiple trips in domestic vehicles to dispose of larger amounts of waste	The length of the trailer would have Health and Safety implications due to the manoeuvrability on site Commercial sized trailers are open to abuse by trade/businesses From experience larger trailers attend site overloaded posing a H&S risk Large trailers spend an excessive amount of time on site off loading preventing residents in domestic vehicle accessing the sites in a timely manner	Retain the restriction on trailer length Improve clarity in the policy on trailer lengths permitted to access the HRCs, e.g. load length measurements.
High sided vans should be allowed a permit to access the HRC	Allow vans elevated above 2.14 to be granted a permit	Residents who already own a high sided van will have access to the HRC to dispose of waste Residents with large gardens/undertaking home improvements have to make	The height of the vans would not be able to access the HRCs due to onsite height restriction barriers. Having site staff open and close height restriction barriers would	Retain the restriction on vehicle height

Appendix 3 - Members Comments and Policy Recommendations

| | | multiple trips in domestic vehicles to dispose of larger amounts of waste | be time consuming and create possible onsite delays for other users

Commercial sized vans are open to abuse by trade/businesses

Large vans spend an excessive amount of time on site off loading preventing residents in domestic vehicle accessing the sites in a timely manner | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Trailers with ramps should be allowed to access the HRC** | Trailers with ramps should be permitted to lower them to allow for waste removal on site | It will be easier for residents to remove waste from the trailer prior to disposal. | The extended ramps on trailers increase the length of a trailer reducing available space on site for other users.

The extended ramps on trailers are a trip hazard for site users and staff.

Waste can to be dragged down the rams leading to debris on the ground and a trip hazard. | Retail the restriction that rams on trailers must not be used when off loading waste. |
| **Trailers with caged sides should be allowed to access the HRC** | Trailers with extended cage sides should be allowed to access the HRCs | This will allow for the safer transit of waste within the trailer on the public highway.

Trailers with caged sides that cannot be removed will be allowed to access the HRC with a permit. | Allowing trailers with increased holding capacity could be open to abuse by trade/businesses | Allow trailers with caged sides to have access to the HRC as long as they are standard factory issue and the waste can be removed without lowering the ramp or removing the sides completely |
| **Boxed trailers should be allowed to access the HRC** | Boxed trailers should be allowed access to the HRCs | This will allow for the safer transit of waste within the trailer on the public highway.

Residents who have already bought a boxed trailer will have | Boxed trailers are commercial in size and open to abuse by trade/businesses.

Site staff cannot see what waste is retained inside the boxed | Retain the restriction on boxed trailers. |

Appendix 3 - Members Comments and Policy Recommendations

		access to the HRC to dispose of waste Residents with large gardens/undertaking home improvements have to make multiple trips in domestic vehicles to dispose of larger amounts of waste	trailer until it is at the point of disposal increasing the potential for non-conforming waste to be brought to site.	
Sign written vehicles should be allowed in certain circumstances	Vehicles which are sign written should be allowed a permit if their business is not deemed to be generating waste	Residents who have access to business vehicle/personal vehicles which are sign written to promote a business will be allowed access to a HRC to dispose of waste.	There is the potential that trade waste will be disposed of at the HRC leading to a noncompliance with legislation. While not obvious most business do produce waste and it may not be apparent to the site team. Allowing some sign written vehicle and not others will create inequity to service users and lead to contentious work environment on site should site operatives be challenged.	Retail the restriction on sign written vehicles having an annual permit and continue to provide the option to obtain a temporary permit.

Appendix 4

Vehicle Permit Policy

recycle for Flintshire
ailgylchu dros Sir y Fflint

Overview

Policy	Vehicle Permit Policy
Portfolio	Streetscene and Transportation
Service Area	Waste Strategy
Related Documents	Household Waste Collection and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy

Revision History

Version	Issue date	Summary of Changes
1	April 2022	Standalone policy implemented following review of the Household Waste Collection and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy
2	TBC	XX XX XX

Consultation

Version	Who	Date
1	Operatives, management, Chief Officer Team, Elected Members, Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet	2021/22
2	Operatives, management, Chief Officer Team, Elected Members, Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee	2022

Approval

Version	Who/Where	Date
1	Cabinet Committee	18 January 2022

CONTENTS

1. **Flintshire Vehicle Permit Scheme**

Flintshire County Council currently manages and operates five Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) for Flintshire residents to recycle or reuse household items that cannot be collected by the kerbside collections vehicles. The centres are situated at the following locations across the County:

- Greenfield
- Sandycroft
- Mold
- Buckley
- Rockliffe (Oakenholt)

The HRCs are solely for the disposal of small scale household waste from domestic properties. Commercial and/or business waste is not accepted in line with the conditions of the Environmental Permit.

To control access and manage the waste volumes being delivered to a HRC, the Council operates a vehicle permit scheme.

This policy sets out the parameters of the vehicle permit scheme.

1.1 Vehicle Permit Scheme Criteria

- A permit is issued on a rolling twelve month basis
- Twelve visits are permitted every twelve months.
- A householder can choose when to use the permits e.g. all in one month or spread over the year.
- A full application must be resubmitted following the permit expiry
- Only one permit is to be issued per residential address
- Trailers **will not** be allowed access if towed by a vehicle requiring a permit (E.g. van)
- Sign written vehicles **are not** eligible for a permit (this includes vehicles with business signage, logos or other advertising)
- Vehicles registered to a business **are not** eligible for a permit
- Domestic vehicles **are not** eligible if linked to businesses e.g. highlighted through business signage, logos, other advertising or address.
- The vehicle/owner must **not be** a registered waste carrier with either Natural Resources Wales or Environment Agency (England)

2. **Vehicle Eligibility**

The type of vehicle will dictate whether a permit is required.

2.1 Vehicles that do not require a permit

- Small car
- Standard car
- Large family car

- Sports Utility vehicles (SUV)
- 4x4 vehicles (also known as All-Wheel drive)
- Motorbike
- Mobility vehicle

2.2 Vehicles that do require a permit

- Pick up (two and four seats) i.e. a small vehicle with an open/closed part at the back in which goods can be carried
- Car derived van
- Small van
- Medium van (standard or low roof elevation below 7 feet or 2.14 metres)
- Single axle trailers up to 6.6 feet / 2 metres in length with/without caged sides*
- Twin axle trailers up to 6.6 feet / 2 metres in length with/without caged sides*
- Minibus (with internal fixtures intact)
- Camper vans and motor homes (with internal fixtures intact and below 7 feet or 2.14 metres)

* Allow trailers with caged sides to have access to the HRC as long as they are standard factory issue and the waste can be removed without lowering the ramp or removing the sides completely

2.3 Vehicles that are not eligible for a permit

- Large box van (Luton type)
- Large goods vehicles (LGVs)
- Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)
- Tipper vehicles
- Flatbed vehicles
- Large vans (XLWB; LWB)
- Vans with high roof elevations (over 7 feet or 2.14 metres)
- Trailers longer 6.6 feet / 2 metres in length
- ~~Caged trailers /~~ Boxed trailers / trailers with extended side panels / modified trailers
- Trailers with access ramps
- Minibus (with internal fixtures removed)
- Camper vans and motor homes (with internal fixtures removed)
- Agricultural vehicles
- Horse boxes / trailers

3. Application process

Householders paying standard council tax in Flintshire will be entitled to apply for permits by fully completing an application form. Permits will only be issued to Flintshire households. (Only households in Flintshire paying standard Council Tax are entitled to use the Council's Household Recycling Centres).

All applications for a vehicle permit will be made via the online e-form available on the Council's Website.

On application, all required documentation must be submitted so that an assessment of eligibility can be made.

Householders will be required to provide the following information:

- Name of applicant
- Address
- Telephone number
- Vehicle registration number
- Vehicle make, model and colour
- Height of the vehicle / dimensions of the trailer
- Type of Vehicle: as specified in Section 2.2
- Confirmation of acceptance of Terms and Conditions of the permitting scheme

For applicants who repeatedly do not provide the required documentation their application will be refused and they will not be eligible to re-apply for a period of six months.

A resident will be allowed one appeal should a vehicle permit be refused. To lodge an appeal the resident must complete the relevant e-form on the Council's website clearly stating the grounds for appeal. Before considering an appeal a resident must refer to this policy and only appeal if they feel it has not been applied correctly.

Terms and Conditions apply and can be viewed on the Council's website along with the privacy notice.

3.1 Vehicle documentation required on application

- Completed e-form
- Full vehicle log book / A copy of the V5 Vehicle Registration document
- Driving licence
- 1 x utility bills or council tax bill to prove you live within the County of Flintshire (current and within the last 12 months)
- The addresses on the documentation must match and be for the property where the vehicle is registered
- Photos of the vehicle for which the permit is requested:
  - Rear of vehicle showing number plate (doors closed)
  - Rear interior view from rear doors showing registration plate (additional picture required if registration plate cannot be seen if doors are open
  - Front view showing number plate
  - Side view (one side)

3.2 Trailer documentation required on application:

- Complete e-form
- Full vehicle log book / A copy of the V5 Vehicle Registration document
- Trailer dimensions (see diagram below)
- Driving licence
- 1 x utility bills or council tax bill to prove you live within the County of Flintshire (current and within the last 12 months)

- The addresses on the documentation must match and be for the property where the vehicle is registered
- Photos of trailer for which the permit is requested clearly showing:
  - Rear of trailer showing registration plate
  - Side view showing full length and height.

The trailer dimensions required to be submitted with the application are:

Width

Length
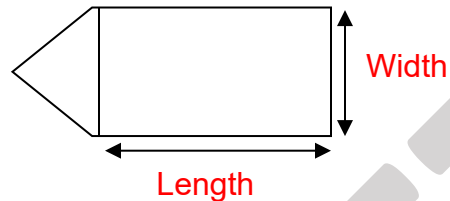
No alternative or self-interpreted dimensions will be accepted.

4 Permit Holder Access

To better control access to HRCs and prevent abuse of the permit scheme, permits will be issued to a designated HRC site. The permits will be issued for the site in closest proximity to the resident's property or, where a valid business case is presented, for the resident's site choice. This will assist in the control of larger more complex vehicles at each site meaning that one site is not overwhelmed with permitted vehicles.

- Permits will only be issued to individual addresses once per annum.
- Vehicles cannot be issued permits against multiple addresses.
- A permit is only valid for the vehicle described on the permit

~~If a householder changes their address or vehicle they must notify the Council before reapplying with new details. Amended permits will invalidate the old permit.~~

4.1 Changing/Selling a vehicle

When a resident sells a vehicle which has been issued with a vehicle permit they must return the permit to the following address with a covering letter explaining the situation. The permit is not transferable with the vehicle at the point of sale.

Flintshire County Council
Alltami Depot, Mold Road, Alltami, Flintshire CH7 6LG

If the resident purchases another vehicle which requires a permit then a full application must take place to ensure that the vehicle is compliant to policy.

4.2 Lost or Damaged Vehicle Permits

If a resident loses or damages a permit they must contact the council immediately to notify of the situation. The permit will be immediately cancelled and site staff notified. A replacement

permit can be issued; however, the number of uses already taken place will be deducted from the permit.

Streetscene Contact Centre 01352 701234

Email: streetsceneadmin@flintshire.gov.uk

4.3 4 Collection of Soil Conditioner

Soil condition is available free of charge from the HRCs. If a resident wants to collect this product in a vehicle that is subject to this policy then they must have a valid permit to gain access to the site. This is to ensure that only vehicles accessing the HRCs are of the approved height or length.

If the resident is only attending site to collect soil conditioner, and not to dispose of any recycling or waste, then they will have to show their valid permit however a visit will not be deducted from the allocated twelve.

5. Withdrawing from the vehicle permit scheme

Residents can withdraw from the vehicle permit scheme at any time by returning their permit to the following address with a covering letter explaining their wish to cancel:

> **Flintshire County Council**
> **Alltami Depot, Mold Road, Alltami, Flintshire CH7 6LG**

Should unused permits not be handed back, the Council will treat this situation the same as if a householder has lost the permits.

6. One-Off Permit

For those vehicles that do not conform to the vehicle eligibility criteria, such as a vehicle registered to a business, whose owner(s) require to use their vehicle/trailer to dispose of larger, bulky items, then a one-off permit can be issued if it is clearly demonstrated that the waste being disposed of is not related to the business or activity of the business to which the vehicle is registered or used e.g. a vehicle registered to a plumber wanting to dispose of household garden waste.

To obtain a one-off permit an application must be made in advance of the visit via the specified e-form on the Council's website so that an assessment can be made and a permit issued.

The vehicle type for the application of a one-off permit must conform to one of the vehicle types stated in Section 2.2.

A one-off permit may be issued a maximum of two times in a twelve month period.

7. Temporary Permit

a) Using a Hired Vehicle to remove household waste

A temporary permit can be issued to a Flintshire resident who hires a vehicle to remove their own household waste.

The householder will be required to provide the vehicle hire agreement to demonstrate that the vehicle is on hire.

b) Borrowing or using a workplace or company van and commercial type vehicle

Householders from Flintshire may use their employer's van or commercial type vehicles (subject to the vehicle complying with the type and size restrictions detailed in Section 2.2) to deposit their own household waste at Household Recycling Centres.

However, the householder will require a letter from the owner (or their representative) on company notepaper giving permission to the applicant to use the vehicle to move their own domestic waste, which will be used in place of the Vehicle Registration Document V5 for verification purposes (proof of residency in Flintshire will still be required by the householder).

c) Borrowing or using family/friends vehicle

Householders from Flintshire may make use of a family member or friends vehicle (subject to the vehicle complying with the type and size restrictions detailed in Section 2.2) to deposit their own household waste at Household Recycling Centres.

Proof of residency in Flintshire will still be required by the householder but it is not a requirement that the vehicle be register within Flintshire.

The vehicle type for the application of a one-off permit will be required to conform to one of the vehicle types stated in Section 2.2. If the vehicle does not meet the vehicle sizing or type requirements it will not be allowed access onto the HRC site.

A temporary permit will be issued a maximum of one time in a twelve month period and will allow for three visits over a seven day period.

To obtain a temporary permit an application must be made in advance by contacting **Streetscene Contact Centre on 01352 701234 / streetsceneadmin@flintshire.gov.uk** so that an assessment can be made and a permit issued.

8. Abuse of the vehicle permit scheme

Flintshire County Council reserves the right to terminate all concessions afforded by the permit scheme if the permit holder is in contravention of any stipulations contained within this policy and the Terms and Conditions of use.

Abuse, aggressive behaviour or threats to members of staff or other residents will not be tolerated and may result in a permit either being revoked with immediate effect or the permit holder being excluded from access to Flintshire County Council HRCs.

HRC staff members are authorised and permitted to confiscate a permit should certain circumstances make this necessary, for example:

- Abuse, aggressive behaviour or threats towards site staff or other residents.

- Not adhering to site rules including breach of site safety rules, speeding restrictions, staff directives.
- Permits defaced, altered or with illegible details are invalid.
- Not declaring hazardous waste within a load.
- Depositing non-conforming or waste types that are not permitted on site.

Permits issued apply to a vehicle at a specific Flintshire address and not the waste, therefore, even with a permit the site staff at HRCs are still able to turn away anybody suspected of bringing in waste of a commercial nature.

Lost or Damaged Permits

If any permits are lost or damaged the householders should contact the Council to report the loss or damage.

The Council will monitor visits to HRC sites to prevent and control duplicated requests for replacement of lost or stolen permits, that is, householders that continue to use the supposedly lost permits, after receiving new ones.

The Council will monitor visits to identify any permits that have been copied or faked.

The Council will have the right to reject any person from a HRC site if it suspects that the person has contravened any of the conditions highlighted within this Policy.

Householders who turn up at a Household Recycling Centre site without a permit for their van or small commercial-type vehicle will be turned away.

Any person bringing trade waste to site with or without a permit will be reported to Natural Resources Wales.

This Policy supersedes the Household Waste Collection and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy 2017, Sections 12.7 to 12.13

Appendix 5 - Proposed Booking Criteria for Tyres

The proposed Household Recycling Centre booking system criteria for Tyres:

- Online booking to be completed by resident
- Only domestic tyres to be accepted
- No commercial tyres (wagon/plant) will be accepted
- Restriction on the amount of waste coming in e.g. Up to 4 tyres per visit
- Restriction on the number of bookings e.g. one per year
- Allow disposal at all HRCs, not restricting to closest site due to container availability
- Review storage capacity at all HRCs to ensure consistent service provided
- If being brought in a van/trailer then the driver must have a valid permit to book
- Restrict number of time slots available per day e.g. 1 hour slots
- Allow seven days a week disposal

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Sir y Fflint Flintshire COUNTY COUNCIL

EVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	15th November 2022
Report Subject	Ash Dieback Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Countryside & Economy
Report Author	Andrew Farrow Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report provides an update on how Flintshire County Council has addressed Ash Dieback in 2021/22 in line with the *2019 Ash Dieback Action Plan* (as presented to Informal Cabinet 10th September 2019). It also reports on the recommendations following an internal audit in July 2021. A previous update was reported to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12th May 2021.

The 2019 Ash Dieback Action Plan identified and proposed ways in which to manage the risk and costs associated to Ash Dieback, highlighting where infected Ash trees have an increased risk to public safety and the financial cost incurred to the Council.

To moderate and manage the risk associated to Ash Dieback, a series of surveys have been undertaken to assess the distribution and disease classification of roadside Ash trees for primary and secondary roads. A programme of tree removal is ongoing for Flintshire owned trees and landowners with infected trees have been contacted to highlight the presence of Ash Dieback in their trees, with an expectation that they will manage their own trees to mitigate the risks.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That Members note the content of this update and support the officers in their ongoing work associated with Ash Dieback.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	**EXPLAINING THE ASH DIEBACK UPDATE**
1.01	**The Disease in Flintshire** Ash Dieback was first confirmed in Flintshire on the A55 at Northop by Forestry Commission plant health staff in 2015. In 2016 it was found in a woodland near Rhydymwyn on Ash that had been cut down underneath overhead power cables.
1.02	It is evident that since being initially recorded Ash Dieback is now endemic in the county and widely distributed. It is estimated that Flintshire has approximately 24,000 ash trees growing outside the woodland environment adjacent to the highway.
1.03	**Responding to the disease** Flintshire County Council are focusing on the Ash trees that pose the most risk to the public, whether these trees are growing on Council or privately owned land. The Council has published an Ash Dieback Action Plan which can be found on the Council's web pages here:- https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/LeisureAndTourism/Countryside-and-Coast/Ash-Dieback.aspx
1.04	**Survey** Officers are now in an annual cycle of survey and inspection to identify, monitor and classify infected Ash trees growing adjacent to Flintshire's roads. These surveys have verified the position, size and characteristics of the roadside ash trees/groups of ash trees, ownership and the disease infection classification - 1 to 4, (with 4 being the "most serious"). This information is recorded on a GIS program and will aid officers with the management of Flintshire County Council's infected Ash trees and prompt officers (under Section 154 of the Highways Act) to notify private landowners to make safe their diseased roadside Ash trees.
1.5	To simplify the surveying process into manageable sizes, the highways network was subdivided into roads which were deemed to be of a high priority roads (Red), secondary roads (Amber) and other roads (blank). Priority appointment level being speed of traffic, volume of traffic and the general character of the traffic.
1.6	All priority roads have been surveyed from a vehicle to map the general disease spread. This then prioritises the areas to follow up with a foot survey and tree inspection. To date 145,603m or 67% of the priority roads and 23,460m or 25% of the secondary roads have been surveyed. With 50% of combined priority and

		secondary compartments remaining to be surveyed, it is anticipated that the foot survey will be completed in 2023.
1.7		Information obtained in the foot survey is used by the administration team to direct land searches (to identify landowners with infected trees), quantify the extent of the work and to officially prompt the Authority to instruct landowners to engage with the management of infected Ash trees
1.8		To date our survey data shows that the vast majority of infected trees are on private land and although the Authority have powers to deal with these trees, the approach currently adopted is to target owners with Class 3 & 4 trees, emphasise their responsibility and encourage landowners to manage their own trees. (via a series of letters). It is difficult to predict which landowners will/can take the responsible view.
1.9		The school baseline tree survey is complete with initial remedial work accomplished, with future activities focusing on monitoring tree health and responding as and when necessary. Countryside sites are monitored in-house and infected Ash trees are systematically removed within the winter felling programme. It is proposed that greenspaces will be subject to an initial baseline tree survey in 2022 (as per schools) with subsequent work acted upon recommendations
1.10		**Summary Data** Searches completed on 24 road compartments (out of 93) and represents all the red high priority compartments Total trees searched and surveyed up to March 2022:

TOTALS	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
5229	729	1395	1133	1972

3105 (Flintshire, Unregistered and Private) recorded as class 3 and 4

1.11		253 Private Owners have been identified and written to. 108 have already taken action (action is identified as either felling their trees or providing an indication that they will manage/fell their trees). If a landowner does not act to remove a potential threat to the highway, then Flintshire may issue a Sect 154 notice and ultimately undertake the work and attempt to recoup the cost. This extent of this work is unknown.
1.12		**Flintshire Action** 1295 Ash trees have been recorded as Flintshire owned trees within the red compartments It is accepted that Flintshire will assume the responsibility for Ash trees growing on unregistered land. The number of unregistered trees within the red compartments is 857

	It is estimated that around 4-5000 unregistered Ash trees are growing adjacent to the highway across the county.
1.13	Action to deal with the 1295 Flintshire owned trees: 2020-2022 FCC owned trees felled – 218 2022–2023 Number of trees planned to be felled - 1077
1.14	Work on 'recovery' to re-plant the trees lost due to this disease will begin once the risk to highway has been reduced and officer time can be reprioritised to focus on planting.
1.15	The 2018 Urban Tree and Woodland Plan aims to increase canopy cover across Flintshire and clearly Ash Dieback presents a challenge in achieving the 3.5% target with so many trees having to be removed. However in February 2022 officers were able to offset the recent losses by utilising Welsh Governments Woodland Improvement Grant to plant 5000 new trees at Wepre Park.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	Currently there is no allocated budget to deal with Ash Dieback and is being reflected as an in-year portfolio pressure. The programme of work is generating a substantial amount of additional work, and is currently being absorbed into Officer work programmes. However, this is having an impact on existing day to day duties of key officers, in particular the Tree Inspector who reports that the ongoing and regular Highways and Open-space tree inspections are behind schedule, and response times to inspect trees on request from customers is taking longer. This time delay may lead to an increase in risk in dealing with potentially unsafe trees. The Tree Inspector has also ceased undertaking work for Housing and Valuation & Estates teams.
2.02	Staffing cost 2021/22

Position	Grade	ADB Role	ADB Time Commitment/ Cost
Woodland Officer	G7	Coordinate/Dev. Programmes Develop and Trial Surveys Survey Roadside Trees Liaise with landowners Co-manage information posts Offer Advice and Training. Research	90% £47,000
Admin Support	G2	Organise and Administer Files	40%

			Coordinate email response and phone hub.	£10,400
			Land searches	
			Organise and if necessary redraft and send out letters and information posts	
	Tree Inspector	G7	Survey (Ezytreev)	20%
			Highways link officer.	£10,400
			Liaise with landowners.	
			Supervision/manage tree resource	
	Manager	G11	Project overview, management control and coordination. Senior Officer reporting	5% £4,100

2.03	Currently it is anticipated with the current staffing resource levels, the foot survey will not be completed until 2023. This allows a degree of risk that there may be trees unknown which have reached class 4 disease state.
2.04	Early surveys indicated that Ash Dieback maybe accelerating through the disease classification. The 2022 survey, with hot and dry weather, may show a change in pace as the disease thrives better in damp conditions. The pace of the disease is crucial in planning our response as the current staffing provision may not keep pace with a. identifying class 3 and 4 trees; b. identifying the landowners and communicating with them the inherent risk to the highway and c. the capacity of the Tree Inspector to coordinate works to remove the trees.
2.05	Current average tree felling cost £120

Estimated felling cost of FCC owned trees adjacent to the highway in red compartments - £155,400.

Estimated felling cost of trees growing on un registered land in red compartments - £102,840

Estimated cost to remove private trees through Sect 154 notice is yet to be defined, however on current figures were expecting 20% of private trees to go through to notice and with a likelihood that FCC will undertake the works and endeavour to recoup the costs. This is estimated to be 2000 trees and cost £240,000 |

3.00	**CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT**
3.01	Local members and Town & Community Councils are notified of upcoming works to fell infected ash trees adjacent to the Highway. Landowners are notified when infected ash trees on their property are posing a risk to the Highway with a request for them to make safe.

4.00	**RISK MANAGEMENT**
4.01	**Internal audit** A review of the management of Ash Dieback was undertaken as part of the approved Internal Audit Strategic Plan for 2021/22
4.02	A black inherent risk (catastrophic impact/ very high to extremely high likelihood) relating to Ash Dieback has been raised in the Council's Corporate Risk Register. The risk focuses on the implications of Ash Dieback on finances and reputation of the Council due to the scale of the problem and the ability to make safe highways and Council amenity land
4.03	Audit considered the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls in place to manage the risks and identified some improvements to controls with an amber red assurance rating reported.
4.04	**Positive Audit findings** The Ash Dieback Action Plan 2019 is comprehensive and identifies the key expected risks to the Council. It also sets out the strategy to address the risks identified. Legal Counsel Advice was sought in July 2020 to assess the adequacy of the Ash Dieback Action Plan 2019. The review by Legal Counsel concluded the plan approach was sound provided it was properly implemented. A number of updates have been provided to Senior Management and Members on progress of the Ash Dieback Action Plan 2019.
4.05	**Areas for improvement** Recommendation: A formal detailed delivery plan to be devised for the removal of Flintshire owned trees and those on unregistered land, with timescales/targets to be established. Explore reporting capabilities from ARCGIS system and routinely generate management information to provide progress updates against newly established targets. Action: A highways delivery and risk management plan has been produced. A review of ARCGIS was carried out and found that the reporting functions and management capabilities were inadequate, therefore work has shifted to use the existing Ezytreev programme to more effectively manage Ash Dieback information.
4.06	Recommendation: The outstanding work to identify the ownership of trees on private land and to send out first stage letters to those private landowners to be completed as quickly as possible. A review of all customer communication and effectiveness to be completed and management information to be introduced to oversee action plan deliverables. Action:

	All landowners within red, high priority compartments have been identified and written to. Work is ongoing to identify landowners in the next priority area. A review of the 4 stage letters was carried out with audit recommendations included.
4.07	Recommendation: Reports to senior management and members will be maintained at 6 monthly intervals. Reports will include performance targets and details of progress against these targets to ensure Senior Management and Members have a clear understanding of the success of the actions in mitigating risk. Action: This report is the first of such
4.08	Recommendation: A project/plan risk register incorporating strategic and operational risks to be compiled and regularly reviewed (at least quarterly) to assess impact on project/plan deliverables. Risk Method Statements (supporting corporate risk PE12) to be update every 6 months in line with designated timescales. Action: An operational risk register has been written as part of the delivery plan and will be reviewed every quarter.
4.09	All audit recommendations have now been completed and closed.

5.00	**APPENDICES**

6.00	**LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**
6.01	**Contact Officer: Tom Woodall, Access & Natural Environment Manager** **Telephone: 01352 703902** **E-mail: tom.woodall@flintshire.gov.uk**

7.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
7.01	**Common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)** is a native ash tree found in nearly every part of the UK. Ash is typically found in hedgerows, highway verges and un-grazed land and a wide variety of urban spaces including, open spaces, semi-urban woodlands, parks, private gardens, schools and cemeteries.
7.02	**Ash Dieback (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus)** is a fungal pathogen that affects the UK's native ash trees. The disease arrived in Europe from Asia in the 1990s and spread rapidly on the continent. The disease was first recorded in Britain in 2012.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	15th November 2022
Report Subject	Biodiversity Duty Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Report Author	Andrew Farrow Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report details how Flintshire County Council is making progress in delivering its biodiversity duty under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.   Flintshire County Council's Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan 2020 – 2023, titled 'Supporting Nature in Flintshire' is explained and the progress of action to deliver objectives is reviewed, highlighting key areas of biodiversity work within the County. The report includes the statutory Section 6 report which will be submitted to Welsh Government in January 2023 at the end of the second 3 year reporting round.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That Members note the content of this update and support the officers in their ongoing work associated with improving biodiversity.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE BIODIVERSITY DUTY UPDATE
1.01	**Background** Nature is our planet's life support system and consequently essential for human survival. Our natural environment provides our food, water, air, building materials, medicines and landscape. Biodiversity is the variety of

	life on earth and biodiversity loss continues as a direct result of human impacts, through habitat loss and degradation, over exploitation, pollution, climate change and the invasion of non-native species.
1.02	The Local Authority has a responsibility to function sustainability and lead by example when it comes to protecting and enhancing our natural environment. To meet the challenge of reversing the decline in biodiversity it is essential that we act and ensure that, as a Local Authority, we meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
1.03	Flintshire County Council's Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan is produced in response to the enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The Act requires that Public Authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems. "Supporting Nature in Flintshire" is Flintshire County Council's second biodiversity duty plan and covers the period from 2020-2023. This updated plan continues the previous good work in delivering biodiversity action and maintains progress to embed biodiversity as consideration across all departments.
1.04	It is a statutory requirement that progress against the Biodiversity plan is reported to Welsh Government within the specified 3 year reporting schedule. The next Section 6 report is due to be submitted in January 2023.
1.05	The Section 6 report (Appendix 1) details the progress made in delivering action to meet the plans 20 actions under 6 objectives. When last reported to Cabinet in 2021 of the 20 actions, 20% were making good progress, 65% making some progress and 15% not started or had no progress. To date in 2022, 35% are making good progress and 65% some progress with 0% having no progress at all.
1.06	**Objective 1 - Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels** Since 2019 there has been much progress in engaging key departments across the Council. We continue to maintain a strong relationship with Streetscene and Transportation in the management of our estate, we support our Regeneration and Capital Housing teams in the development of linked green infrastructure projects. We have ongoing communication with social value and impact assessment staff and most recently we have engaged with staff developing and delivering the Climate Change Strategy. The integrated impact assessment process now fully considers biodiversity and environmental impact, guidance documents and staff contacts accompany the assessment forms to provide additional guidance if needed by project managers. Implementation of the duty now features within the Council Plan and the Climate Change Strategy, in addition to the Portfolio Business Plan.

	The required social value element within the procurement process now provides an opportunity for environmental considerations and has successfully been implemented for biodiversity benefit and consistency and ensure social, economic and environmental factors are not compromised.
	Additional environmental impacts and opportunities within the procurement process are being considered in detail through a specific officer group implementing the climate change strategy.
	Progress has been made developing internal communication. The Biodiversity Officer works closely with Streetscene and Transportation, Regeneration, Energy and Climate Change teams and is building stronger working relationships across Capital maintenance, Education, Aura and Housing. This has provided opportunities to highlight areas where practice can be changed to benefit biodiversity for example, within play areas and school design.
	Training and demonstrations in specific systems and machinery have been provided to Streetscene and Countryside staff including non-chemical weed control, various cut and collect machinery and electric grounds management equipment. Communication regarding tree protection has also been circulated internally.
	The re-scheduled Greener Development Conference coordinated by the Biodiversity Officer and colleagues in the regional nature partnership (Bionet) will be hosted on 24th November 2022 with attendance of staff from various departments across Flintshire County Council. The conference is expected to attract 150 delegates and will promote biodiversity within design and development.
	We host a wide range of activities and events and has included bat walks and talks, site bioblitzs, recorder days, woodland and tree days, meadow events, plant walks and talks.
	In addition to physical events which were impacted throughout Covid, we have built on our virtual promotion and publicity through the Flintshire County Council Nature webpages which have been updated and the Bionet website and social media platforms.
	Within the reporting period we ran our first Flintshire Eco Champions schools programme which was completed in 2022 after facing delays as a result of Covid. The programme visited a total of 20 primary schools
	In 2022 the addition of grant funded biodiversity staff across the region has allowed continued progress in terms of collaboration including; species and habitat monitoring, spatial data collection, publicity and events (social media content, greener development conference, Bionet awards, resource development). North East Wales Local Authorities have also collaborated to grant fund a regional local nature partnership officer post which should be in place by 2023
1.07	**Objective 2 - Safeguard species and habitats of principle importance and improve their management** In consultation with Bionet, the regional nature partnership, the first three priority habitats (grassland, woodland and wetland) for our area have been

	outlined on the nature partnership website with short, medium and long term targets. This document will evolve online and provide evidence of change and guidance for regional conservation project priorities. It can be viewed here https://www.bionetwales.co.uk/nature-recovery-plan/ In addition, the website contains an online downloadable resource which provides project case studies which are delivering the plan.
1.08	**Objective 3 - Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation** Grant funding has enabled good progress to increase wildflower areas and tree planting across our council estate. This shift from conventional grass mowing management to a more varied practice, benefits both nature and carbon emissions/sequestration while helping to improve local urban conditions through increased absorption of pollution, reducing surface water flooding, providing noise and visual barriers, increasing the value of properties and providing shade and urban cooling. Applications for Bee friendly status were submitted for Wepre Park, Greenfield valley Heritage Park and Flintshire County Council in 2022. The applications were provisionally approved pending some further action which is in progress. We are aiming to complete this work by 2023. We now have 157 Wildflower sites mapped. This includes 97 sites in active management (this equates to 11.8 Ha) with 43 going through consultation or installation and another 7 which are proposed. We have also included and are expanding sites at burial grounds, contaminated land sites, active travel routes and play areas within this project. Grant funding has been instrumental in the installation and/or ongoing management of these sites with investment in required machinery to support the change in management. View publicity created about our wildflower work here; https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ea6c55e884b444f8995e45bd2406f2fa A winter programme of tree planting has been undertaken since the launch of the Urban Tree and Woodland Plan in 2018. Although there was impact on community planting events due to Covid, business sponsorship, grant funding and partnership working enabled some progress towards increasing canopy cover in 2020. A Welsh Government grant obtained for tree planting in 2021 supported planting on urban greenspaces across Flintshire. Additional grant created a 12 hectare woodland extension to our largest park, Wepre Park and further grant applications are ongoing. Tree planting projects directly deliver themes within the Natural Resources Wales Area Statement including; Develop and improve urban and rural green infrastructure (and specifically increase urban tree canopy) and Increasing woodland cover for social, environmental and economic benefits for North East Wales. They also address medium and longer term targets set out in the Nature Recovery Plan targets; To Increase the extent

	of native broadleaf and mixed woodland and trees under favourable management and Increase native broadleaf and mixed woodland, canopy cover, connectivity and resilience in North East Wales, while contributing towards resilient ecological networks.
1.09	**Objective 4 - Tackle key pressures (Climate change/Invasive non-native species/habitat loss) on species and habitats** Flintshire County Council has a published Climate Change Strategy available to view here https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Climate-Change/Climate-Change-Strategy-2022-2030.pdf Biodiversity staff and members of the Access and Natural Environment team were fully involved in the development of the strategy and are now represented on the various officer forums for plan delivery. The many areas of work outlined throughout this report will support enhance and deliver for the Climate Change Strategy in addition to the Section 6 duty. The County Ecologist works to enable greener development across the county and ensure that important species and habitats are protected. Non-native species impact and control is a significant and increasing area of work. Biodiversity staff work in partnership across the authority particularly with Streetscene, Rights of Way, Housing and Customer Services to provide advice and guidance with regard to invasive species as appropriate. Where invasive species are identified on Flintshire County Council land we will work with departments to undertake the appropriate control which is often long term treatment. The majority of additional invasive non-native control work relies on volunteer involvement and events, these events faced cancellation and major disruption in 2020/21 due to Covid.
1.10	**Objective 5 - Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring** Action to date has been recorded through internal plan reporting and grant funding reports. In 2020 we began to use interactive mapping to track and evidence change in addition to the above reports. This will allow a more effective level of post project monitoring. Through 2022 we have been developing our use of mapping platforms to monitor and evaluate action. There is also a requirement to report on actions in the Council Plan through the internal system InPhase and through the Climate Change Strategy groups.
1.11	**Objective 6 - Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery** In 2022, Bionet completed a 3 year project to improve its effectiveness, visibility and sustainability. This provided the regional network needed to

support Local Authority and other member action. Through this project the Biodiversity Officer obtained grant funding to increase hours to full time. In 2020/2021 this was complimented by additional grant funding to contract temporary part time support to deliver specific grant funds. While this is not a long term solution it provides a short term structure for effective delivery of commitments in Flintshire.

In 2022 WG grant funding provided additional revenue funding to continue the uplift in hours of the Biodiversity officer and recruited two additional Biodiversity officers on short term temporary contracts. The key role for these positions is delivering projects under the Local Places for Nature funding plan but they will also support outcomes to fulfil our statutory duty, undertake survey and monitoring, publicity and promotion and events.

Grant revenue will also contribute towards a regional nature partnership officer who will be able to lead on regional conservation collaboration.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	FCC revenue budget enables employment of one part time Biodiversity Officer, who works closely with the wider Access & Natural Environment Service and other portfolio colleagues to maximise resources for biodiversity benefit.
2.02	Additional revenue grant funding has been secured on a short term basis to enable the recruitment of supplementary biodiversity staff. This ensures delivery of grant funded projects and statutory functions and allows for additional biodiversity action within the climate change strategy, effective survey and monitoring and proactive environmental education, publicity and promotion.
2.03	Grant income raised for biodiversity projects within the three year reporting round has significantly increased and now supports widespread change for biodiversity benefit across the public realm in Flintshire.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Some areas of work have been subject to consultation with the regional nature partnership. Where changes in land management and or biodiversity enhancement are planned consultation often involves, a wide range of internal colleagues, Councillors, communities and local Town and Community Councils.
3.02	This biodiversity update and WG Section 6 report will be shared with Climate Change Committee

4.00	**RISK MANAGEMENT**
4.01	There is risk that if external funding is not secured resources and action will reduce in Flintshire, local biodiversity will continue to decline with implications for resilience to climate change.
4.02	The Biodiversity officer is the singular permanent member of staff in this field and is limited by capacity and scope. To succeed in addressing the nature crisis in Flintshire and to realise additional benefits from the natural environment such as improved health and wellbeing and economic gain, will be reliant on the successful engagement of other officers and departments across Flintshire County Council and their ability to include biodiversity consideration and benefit as part of their existing work.

5.00	**APPENDICES**
5.01	Appendix 1 – FCC Section 6 report to Welsh Government Appendix 2 –'Supporting Nature in Flintshire' Biodiversity Duty Plan 2020-2023

6.00	**LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**
6.01	**Contact Officer: Tom Woodall, Access & Natural Environment Manager** **Telephone: 01352 703902** **E-mail: tom.woodall@flintshire.gov.uk**

7.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
7.01	**Biodiversity** The variety of life found on earth. It includes all species of plants and animals, their abundance and genetic diversity. **Ecosystem** An ecosystem is made up of living organisms (plants, animals and microorganisms) in conjunction with their non-living environment (air, water, minerals and soil) and all the diverse and complex interactions that take place between them Sustainable development Ensuring that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. **NRW** Natural Resources Wales is the largest Welsh Government Sponsored Body. NRW were formed in April 2013, largely taking over the functions of the Countryside Council for Wales, Forestry Commission Wales and the Environment Agency in Wales, as well as certain Welsh Government functions. **Bionet** The North East Wales Biodiversity Network (Bionet) was formed in October 2009 and renamed in 2010. It brought together partnerships that had existed

	in the Counties of Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham. The broad aim of the network is to conserve, protect and enhance biodiversity for current and future generations. Coordination and collaboration are seen as being important to the partnership alongside other objectives that include raising awareness and the promotion of biodiversity and identifying local priorities to deliver local and regional biodiversity improvements.

Flintshire County Council

Introduction and Context

Flintshire County Council is a Local Authority in North East Wales. Flintshire is set between the rural counties to the west and the more developed areas of Cheshire and Merseyside, land use varies from intensive industrial development along the Dee estuary through to remote and wild areas on the Clwydian range. Over the decades, Flintshire has undergone significant transformation. The impact of development from agriculture, housing, industry and mineral extraction is significant, yet Flintshire still retains many areas that are of importance for wildlife, both urban and rural. Flintshire contains a high number of international, national and local nature conservation designations. The saltmarsh, sand dune and mudflat habitats of the Dee Estuary are not only important in their own right, but host internationally important populations of wildfowl and waders and are designated a Special Protected Area (SAC), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and RAMSAR wetland site of international importance.

The priorities for Flintshire as a County are set by the Council and its local public sector partners. We work together as a Public Services Board (PSB) combining our resources for the benefit of Flintshire

Flintshire County Councils' Biodiversity duty plan "Supporting Nature in Flintshire" has been produced in response to the enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The Act requires that Public Authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems.

A public authority, in complying with the Section 6 duty, must have regard to:
- The Section 7 list of habitats and species of principle importance for Wales
- The State of Nature Report published by Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
- Any area statement which covers all or part of the area in which the authority exercises its functions, once these are produced.

There are strong links between the Environment Act and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Complying with the Section 6 duty will help Public Authorities subject to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to maximise their contributions to the Well-being goals.

 "Supporting Nature in Flintshire" our current biodiversity plan, outlines how, as an organisation, we plan to address our biodiversity duty. "Supporting Nature in Flintshire" is a stand-alone plan which links to action in the Council Plan, Climate change strategy, Tree and urban woodland plan and Wellbeing plan. Commitment to progressing the biodiversity plan is outlined throughout these council documents. Delivery of the plan will also support achievement of outputs across these areas. Performance against the plan is monitored by the biodiversity officer and reported regularly to programme board and to the Council's Cabinet and scrutiny committees.

All actions in the plan are in line with the sustainable development principles, also known as the "5 ways of working" outlined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. All major threats to nature including climate change, over-exploitation, habitat loss, and invasive species can be addressed by living more sustainably which is why action for biodiversity and the wellbeing of future generations should go hand in hand. The 'Well-being Plan for Flintshire 2017-2023' reports that those living, working and visiting Flintshire have said that: *'they place a high value on the natural environment and want to use it more for their own well-being'.*

Flintshire Biodiversity officer collaborates with Conwy, Denbighshire and Wrexham to coordinate the regional nature partnership (Bionet). This partnership works closely with national biodiversity initiatives and regional policies including Natural Resources Wales' Area Statements.

Like other Local Authorities, Flintshire County Council are under extended and continued financial pressure. It is essential that environmental initiatives are viewed holistically for the multiple benefits they provide, embraced as an opportunity to improve County wide well-being and contribute where possible towards financial resilience.

Highlights, Key Outcomes and Issues

Our 20 key actions for nature are set out over 6 objectives. Of the 20 actions 65% are categorised as having Some progress with 35% as having Good progress and 0% having No progress at all. Although categorisation has varied slightly, this compares favourably with 33% of action in the 2016-2019 plan as having Poor or No Progress.

Key Biodiversity Highlights:

Changes in management to our estate has been a key highlight since 2019. We have put the right management in place for a number of our longstanding florally diverse verges. We have created new wildflower sites through installing wildflower turf and seeding and we have increased areas of reduced mow. Perception has changed with general widespread desire for wildflower areas and specific targets in political manifestos to increase the provision. This project was initiated originally through direct member engagement with the Streetscene head of service and has successfully grown as a result of this high level commitment, strong Streetscene/Biodiversity staff collaboration and regular and effective cross department communication. There will be challenges as the project continues to expand but these are being discussed and options to ensure expansion is achievable alongside increasing resource pressures for both departments are being explored.

Our links with other groups; Since 2019 we have worked with numerous proactive community Town and community councils, environmental and community groups. We have built up good links between numerous communities and are able to plan project support as well as providing opportunistic and ad-hoc guidance, practical and financial assistance where needed. This encourages proactive community involvement in environmental initiatives and ensures communities are leading on locally desired action. A recent example of this was supporting a community age friendly and dementia group progress a native bulb and wildflower campaign within their community. Provided the increased biodiversity staffing continues we plan on working with these key proactive community members/groups further in 2023 to provide a support network and enable maximum mutual benefit from action for nature.

Integration with the Climate Change Strategy: Significant integration of biodiversity priorities within the climate change strategy has supported furthering action and helped shine a light on key internal action needed to support biodiversity. The land use theme is particularly relevant and has helped initiative conversations internally about changes in practice and land use. (detail provided under Action 16)

Benefits through social value: New social value requirements across the procurement process have been used to identify opportunities for biodiversity opportunities. Effective use of the social value requirement by FCC officers has enabled the inclusion of biodiversity feature provision by contractors within the capital building maintenance programme.

Any key enablers to biodiversity action:

Additional biodiversity staff: Revenue grant funding received in 2022 to allow increase in hours of the part time Biodiversity officer and recruitment of two additional biodiversity positions (on a 12 month fixed term basis) has been welcomed and essential. Staff provide internal guidance, prepare and deliver grant funded projects, enable statutory action, survey and monitor sites and species and educate, publicise and promote around the environment. This additional capacity will enable a proactive approach to biodiversity conservation in Flintshire.

Local Places for Nature grant funding: The Local Places for Nature programme has significantly supported and contributed to action for biodiversity across public areas managed by the Local Authority. It has facilitated initial steps to move away from a reliance on chemical pesticides and investment in machinery to support new approaches in management reducing the risk associated with these changes and facilitating behaviour transformation. Most recently it has provided revenue grant opportunities to

allow for increased staff capacity, albeit on a short term basis, which has been essential to effectively address the nature crisis, deliver grant funded projects and take a proactive approach to local nature conservation.

Statutory duty; Understanding and awareness of the duty is increasing internally and externally and with local authorities under increasing financial pressure going forward the statutory nature of the duty will be key to continued action to address it.

Notable or continuing negative impacts, and any barriers to action?

Status quo bias and endowment: Widespread concern regarding lifetime costs of natural assets, perceived associated risks, maintenance, and potential conflicting priorities are all regularly stated barriers to action and have recently resulted in significant biodiversity project failure. Existing practice, and process are consistently overvalued without consideration of the wide ranging costs of inaction and the multiple and wide ranging benefits of environmental action.

Public attitudes: Despite general approval of action for nature, there is still significant opposition to local enhancement projects due to aesthetics, personal opinion, perceived conflicts, misunderstanding or miseducation.

Short term grant funding: Whilst the significant increase in grant funding available for biodiversity projects has been welcomed, the short term timeframes are not fit for the purpose of delivering long term biodiversity impact or projects which are required to go through Local authority processes.

Statutory duty: There is a raft of legislation Local authorities must comply with. It is evident that penalties for non-compliance dictate the level of priority given to these various duties. The lack of penalties associated with the Biodiversity duty are complicit with lowering its priority across Local authorities with significantly challenged budgets.

Action Report

NRAP[1] Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.

Action 1. Engage key departments across the Council to support implementation of the Section 6 duty

No Progress	Some Progress	Good Progress

Engagement faced some delays due to the need to the focus of council operations on Covid response between 2020/21. However, the plan and an update on biodiversity action was taken to Informal Cabinet in May 2021 and Environment Scrutiny in June 2021 and supported. The 2022 report and biodiversity project progress will also be taken to Informal Cabinet, Environment Scrutiny and Full Cabinet between Oct and December 22. This process ensures an increased level of awareness of the duty and biodiversity action across the council and confirms high level scrutiny and support.

Since 2019 there has been progress in engaging some key departments across the Council. Work has expanded with our Streetscene department (additional detail in Action 13), we have worked closely with our Regeneration team to support development of linked green infrastructure projects, in particular. We are working with our capital housing projects team, have ongoing communication with social value and impact assessment staff and most recently we have engaged with staff developing and delivering the Climate Change Strategy and additional officers within forums for this programme.

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[1] Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales

Action 2 Assess existing Council plans and policies for impact on biodiversity and influence where possible

| No Progress | Some Progress | Good Progress |

The integrated impact assessment process now fully considers biodiversity and environmental impact, guidance documents and staff contacts accompany the assessment forms to provide additional guidance if needed by project managers.

The Biodiversity Officer attends the integrated impact assessment board as required and provides guidance as necessary. Biodiversity officer and natural environment staff attend a number of the Climate Change Strategy officer forums. Within these forums there is ongoing work to consider scope and possible impact of various internal policies on the environment, seeking opportunities to review and amend where a positive change can be made.

Action 3. Ensure high level consideration of duty in Council documents

| No Progress | Some Progress | Good Progress |

The Biodiversity officer and Natural Environment Department staff provide comment and input into higher level plans. Implementation of the duty now features within the Council plan and the Climate Change Strategy, in addition to the departmental service plan. The full Council Plan 21-23 can be viewed here https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Council-Democracy/Council-Plan-2021-23-Final.pdf

Figure 1. Green Priority Council Plan 21-23

Priority
Green Environment

Definition
The promotion, good management and protection of our green spaces to deliver multiple benefits to the environment and our residents and visitors

Achievement will be measured through:

- Delivering an increase in canopy cover as part of the Urban Tree and Woodland Plan - by March 2022
- Enhancing the natural environment through the delivery of the Section 6 Environment Act Wales biodiversity duty - by March 2022
- Developing a strategy to improve biodiversity and carbon sequestration on the agricultural estate - by December 2021

Biodiversity action features significantly within the Climate Change Strategy and work within the strategy involves the review of plans and policies to assess environmental impact and opportunities, this work is ongoing. The strategy can be viewed here https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Climate-Change/Climate-Change-Strategy-2022-2030.pdf

Action 4. Ensure that environmental impact is considered through the procurement process

| No Progress | Some Progress | Good Progress |

The Council has a strong methodology established through our own TOMs (Themes, Outcomes & Measures) framework which uses social, economic and environmental factors within procurement operations. The joint procurement service with Denbighshire County Council allows collaboration to maximise cost and efficiency savings, this has been used within this reporting round to purchase cut and collect equipment jointly with Denbighshire.

The required social value element within the procurement process now provides an opportunity for environmental considerations and has successfully been implemented for biodiversity benefit and consistency and ensure social, economic and environmental factors are not compromised.

Additional environmental impacts and opportunities within the procurement process are being considered in detail through a specific officer group implementing the climate change strategy. This work is ongoing.

Action 5. Continue to work in partnership to coordinate the regional nature partnership (Bionet)

No Progress	Some Progress	Good Progress

Work to develop the nature partnership (Bionet), maximise its effectiveness and support collaborative conservation action across north east Wales was undertaken through the Local Nature Partnerships Cymru project (2019 – 2022). The project funded Biodiversity officer time to develop joint projects including species monitoring, conservation through spatial data use and collection and promotion/publicity activities for nature recovery including the creation of a partnership website.

In 2022 the addition of grant funded biodiversity staff across the region has allowed continued progress in terms of collaboration including; species and habitat monitoring, spatial data collection, publicity and events (social media content, greener development conference, Bionet awards, resource development). North east Wales Local authorities have also collaborated to grant fund a regional local nature partnership officer post which should be in place by 2023. This position will work across the region and lead on the coordination of the partnership, landscape scale conservation projects, develop the nature recovery action plan further and actively explore grant funding.

Action 6. Continue to develop and deliver projects with partner organisations

No Progress	Some Progress	Good Progress

This is a dynamic area of action with regularly changing grant funding opportunities and a varied range of possible project partners. We regularly have multiple projects with a variety of partner organisations. Supporting and developing these mutually beneficial partnerships is vital for successful local action for nature.

A wide range of our regional partnership projects are displayed on the Bionet nature partnership website at https://www.bionetwales.co.uk/projects/ .

Partner organisations we've collaborated with include: Groundwork North Wales (Our Backyard, Quayscapes), North Wales Wildlife Trust (More meadows, Fruit routes, Swift recovery, Orchard projects) Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (Habitat creation). And a range of local Town and Community Councils, community and conservation groups (Habitat creation, Events)

Action 7. Continue to develop and deliver internal communication and training

No Progress	Some Progress	Good Progress

Following on from the generic biodiversity training held within the previous reporting round.

Progress has been made developing internal communication. The Biodiversity officer works closely with specific staff from Streetscene, Regeneration, Energy and Climate change and is building stronger working relationships across Capital maintenance, Education, Aura and Housing. This has provided opportunities to highlight areas where practice can be changed to benefit biodiversity for example biodiversity enhancement within play areas, biodiversity incorporation into school design and biodiversity enhancement alongside maintenance.

Training and demonstrations in specific systems and machinery have been provided to Streetscene and Countryside staff including non-chemical weed control, various cut and collect machinery and electric grounds management equipment. Communication regarding tree protection has also been circulated internally.

The re-scheduled Greener development conference coordinated by the Biodiversity officer and colleagues in the regional nature partnership will be hosted on 24th November 2022 with attendance of staff from various departments across Flintshire County Council. The conference is expected to attract 150 delegates and will promote biodiversity within design and development.

Action 8. Continue our role in educating residents and future generations about the importance of our natural environment

Educating residents and future generations about the importance of nature is undertaken in a variety of ways.

We host a wide range of activities and events with our countryside service and conservation partners. Over the reporting period this has included bat walks and talks, site bioblitzs, recorder days, woodland and tree days, meadow events, plant walks and talks and more. Despite the disruption caused by Covid between 2020 and 2022, the Access and Natural Environment department held 114 events with 8840 beneficiaries and ran education programmes with schools engaging over 1500 pupils.

In addition to physical events which were impacted throughout Covid we have built on our virtual promotion and publicity through the Flintshire County Council Nature webpages which have been updated and the nature partnership website and social media platforms.

Within the reporting period we ran our first Flintshire Eco Champions schools programme which was completed in 2022 after facing delays as a result of Covid. The programme visited a total of 20 primary schools across the communities of Mynydd Isa, Flint, Penarlag, Lixwm, Sealand, Gwernymynydd, Brynford, Nercwys, Flint, Ewloe, Gronant and Pen -y-fford. Schools were particularly keen to take part in the programme and received 4 led sessions covering climate change, biodiversity and sustainability including a school environmental audit and pledges to take forward. Feedback from schools involved was

Objective 1: Supporting Nature in Flintshire stated:

Where we need to be in 2023:

- *Considering the impact of decisions on the natural environment across all departments as standard and ensuring that decisions seek to promote and enhance nature wherever possible.*
- *Coordinating an influential and effective Regional Nature Partnership and creating opportunities for partnership working.*
- *Our staff understand the impact they can make on the natural world and are confident to suggest change to support continual improvements towards a sustainability.*
- *Supporting and promoting a strong understanding of the importance of nature across our communities.*

Objective 1: 2023 Reporting comment

- *There is still a need to increase environmental awareness across our departments and build on our provision for departmental and role specific training. E.g. incorporating nature into all design projects at early stages.*
- *While communication and engagement internally across departments has greatly increased there is still a critical need to increase the weight given to environmental impact (and the associated multiple benefits) when assessed against other factors. There is a need for a wide range of successful case studies to demonstrate success in changes for environmental benefit and emphasise the multiple direct and indirect benefits of such projects to ensure biodiversity is valued more effectively and for the longer term in decision making.*
- *The time restricted nature of grant funding must be emphasised and appreciated when working on cross departmental grant funded projects to avoid loss of funding.*
- *There is still a significant work to do in educating our communities, dispelling myths and promoting the value of nature.*

overwhelmingly positive. The programme is a collaboration between our Energy department and Biodiversity and we will be looking to continue the programme following review in 2023.

Action 9. Continue to provide and expand our environmental volunteering opportunities

No Progress	Some Progress	Good Progress

Restrictions as a result of Covid greatly impacted on volunteering opportunities throughout 2020/2021.

We have been able to re-establish some of our volunteer species monitoring programmes but there is still work to do in expanding this. Through the nature partnership website we can now link into project volunteering opportunities with our conservation partners and we regularly promote volunteering opportunities through the nature partnership social media platforms.

Internal corporate volunteering opportunities (which are currently significantly undersubscribed) are being considered within the Climate change strategy work programme, this work is ongoing.

Action 10. Publish a Local Nature Recovery Action Plan for North East Wales

Objective 2: Supporting Nature in Flintshire stated:

Where we need to be in 2023:

No Progress — Some Progress — Good Progress

Have an effective, innovative and collaborative Regional Nature Recovery Action Plan

In consultation with the Regional Nature Partnership (Bionet) the first Nature Recovery Action for our area have been outlined on the nature partnership website with short, medium and long term targets. This document will evolve online and provide evidence of change and guidance for regional conservation project priorities. It can be viewed here https://www.bionetwales.co.uk/nature-recovery-plan/

In addition we have created an online downloadable resource which provides project case studies which are delivering the plan.

Objective 2: 2023 Reporting comment

- *We are working to the broad targets in the regional Nature Recovery Plan. However there is a need to develop the plan further.*
- *By 2023 we will have a grant funded regional nature partnership officer in place, the position will cover our Bionet area of Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham and will lead on the coordination of the regional partnership and development of the regional nature recovery plan and progress against the plan.*
- *A range of additional action is undertaken by the County Ecologist through planning consultation, protected habitat and species licencing and ecological mitigation and compliance which protects Sect 7 habitats and species. Our Countryside Services are also actively involved in the management of numerous designated sites which are managed for conservation. Going forward it would be useful to capture this information under objective 2 in addition to the Nature Recovery Action Plan work stream.*

NRAP Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation

Action 11. Green our Council estate and improve accessible green spaces for wildlife and people

Grant funding has enabled good progress to increase wildflower areas and tree planting across our council estate, between 2019 and 2023.

This shift from conventional mown management benefits both nature and carbon emissions/sequestration while helping to improve local urban conditions through increased absorption of pollution, reducing surface water flooding, providing noise and visual barriers, increasing the value of properties and providing shade and urban cooling.

Figure 2. Shows the types of different wildflower sites we are managing, there is scope to increase reduced mow sites in particular going forward.
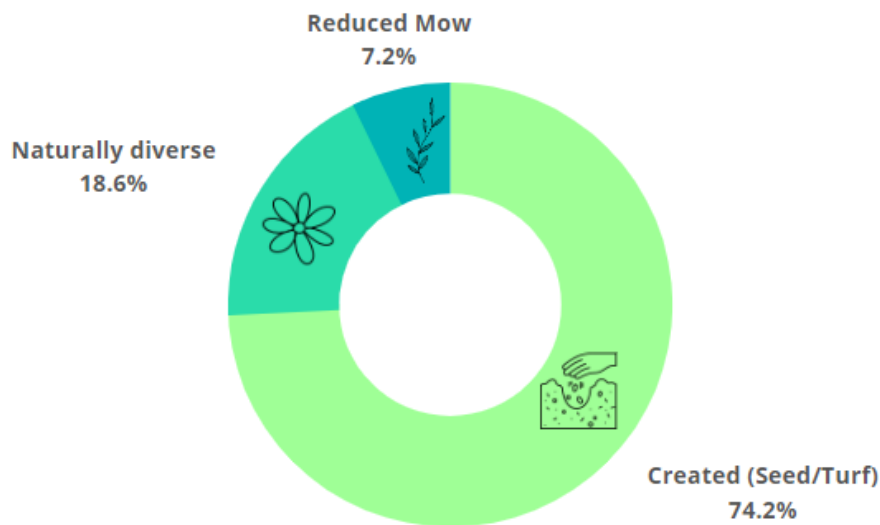
Action 12. Achieve Bee friendly status

Key supporting action to work towards bee friendly status include, reduced use of chemical weed control and investment in the Foamstream system. Reduced areas of mowing, installation and continued management of wildflower areas. Incorporation of green infrastructure into new design and retrofitting into existing.

Applications for Bee friendly status were submitted for Wepre Park, Greenfield valley Heritage Park and Flintshire County Council in 2022. The applications were provisionally approved pending some further action which is in progress. We are aiming to complete this work by 2023.

Action 13. Progress our cross department Wildflower campaign

| No Progress | Some Progress | Good Progress |

Work with Streetscene has been positive, initial grant funding enabled additions to our historical sites in 2021 and sites have increased since then.

Figure 3. Below demonstrates the increase in sites managed for wildflower diversity across the County between 2019 and 2022
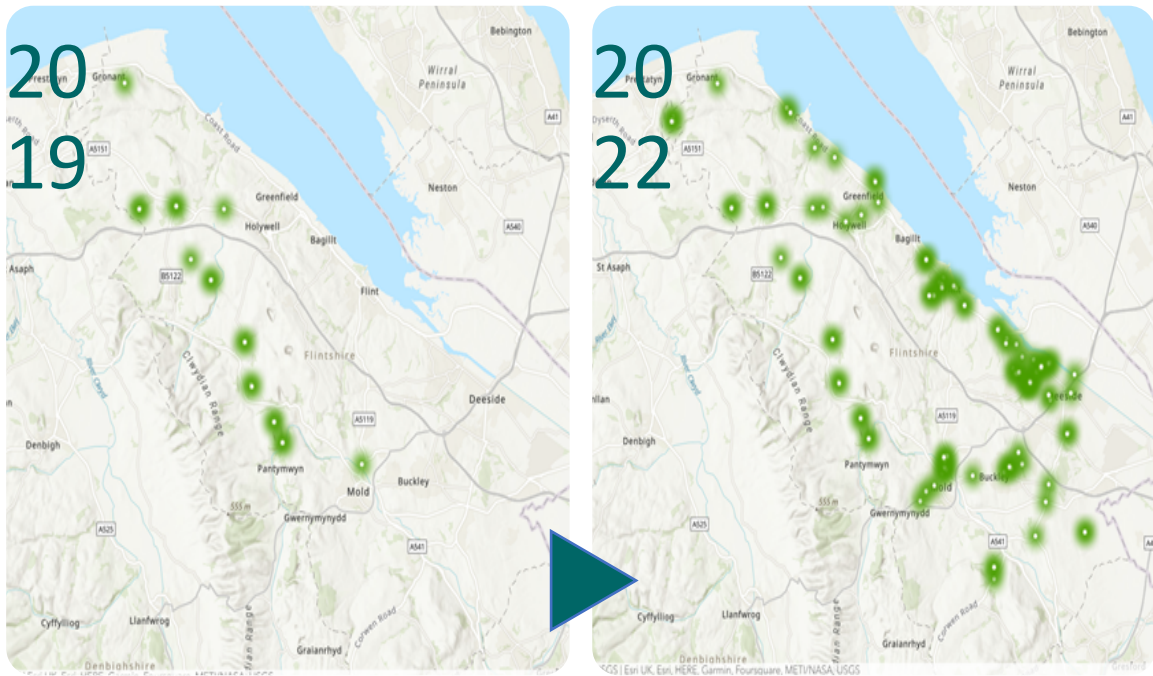
We now have 157 Wildflower sites mapped. This includes 97 sites in active management (this equates to 11.8 Ha/29 Acrs) with 43 going through consultation or installation and another 7 which are proposed.

We have also included and are expanding sites at burial grounds, contaminated land sites, active travel routes and play areas within this project. Grant funding has been instrumental in the installation and/or ongoing management of these sites with investment in required machinery to support the change in management.

The majority of our sites will not require annual re-creation as we have focussed on the creation of perennial meadows through improved management or seeding but for the small number of urban sites where we will need annual re-seeding we are exploring sponsorship options to ensure we have a sustainable funding model into the future.

Figure 4. Chart showing the increase in area of sites managed for wildflower diversity and associated departments.

Estate managed for wildflower diversity (Ha)

Streetscene — Urban green spaces, Road verges
Countryside — Parks, Countryside sites
Campus — Council office estate
Other — Partner organisations
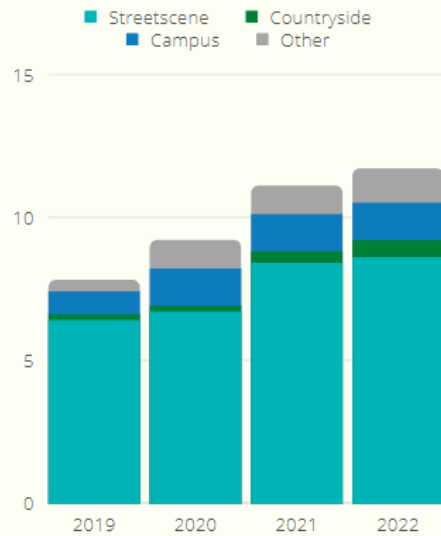
View publicity created about our wildflower work here;
https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ea6c55e884b444f8995e45bd2406f2fa

Action 14. Progress our "Mapping to support nature recovery" project

No Progress | Some Progress | **Good Progress**

We started using ArcGIS mapping for internal biodiversity projects in late 2020 working collaboratively with Denbighshire County Council to target and evidence conservation action.

The mapping allows much greater functionality and efficiency in the field and has proved invaluable in mapping and recording project progress. We now have the majority of our ongoing projects mapped and have used the platform for requesting biodiversity enhancement suggestions, maps are also shared across departments to work efficiently and the platform has been used to create a range of innovative engagement and communication tools.

View a storymap about our Colour Our County project here;
https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/36f5c2af7c604c339f5c06c9b7941376

Action 15.Continue to implement the FCC urban tree and woodland strategy

No Progress | **Some Progress** | Good Progress

A winter programme of tree planting has been undertaken since the launch of the Urban tree and woodland plan in 2018. Although there was impact on community planting events due to Covid, business sponsorship, grant funding and partnership working enabled some progress towards increasing canopy cover in 2020.

A WG grant obtained for tree planting in 2021 supported tree planting in 2021/22 on urban greenspaces across Flintshire. An additional TWIG grant supporting the tree planting to create an extension to our largest country park, Wepre Country Park and additional grant applications are ongoing.

We have used the Outdoor Recreation Valuation tool (ORVal) to value the welfare and recreational value of habitat changes. The web application provides natural capital accounting and can be used to derive monetary measures of the value households attach to the recreational opportunities provided by those sites. Here we used it to estimate the changed value of a site after biodiversity enhancement. The tool was used for a12ha site for grant funded woodland and grassland habitat creation. Site values before and after habitat creation were compared and demonstrated the addition of young woodland, wood pasture,

Objective 3: Supporting Nature in Flintshire stated:

Where we need to be in 2023:

- *Have a greener more biodiverse council estate which is well used and appreciated by residents.*
- *Using accessible and efficient mapping technologies to inform action, evidence change and engage residents.*

Objective 3: 2023 Reporting comment

- The success of our wildflower project is demonstrated above however, with only 1 % of our traditional UK meadow habitat left we are looking to increase the proportion of our sites which have reduced mow to support native wildflower and meadow restoration. This is more challenging in terms of public perception and aesthetic appeal but of higher biodiversity value.
- To date tree planting and wildflower area creation has focussed on generally smaller accessible sites across the highly visible soft estate within the public realm. There will be greater opportunity going forward to target larger less obvious areas of FCC landholdings but substantial work is required in identifying this land and gaining high level approval for a focus on management which will provide biodiversity and climate benefit across appropriate sites.

grassland and orchard increased the welfare and recreational value of the site by almost £250,000. There may be opportunities to expand use of this tool in the future.

Tree planting projects directly deliver themes within the NRW Area Statement including; Develop and improve urban and rural green infrastructure (and specifically increase urban tree canopy) and Increasing woodland cover for social, environmental and economic benefits for North East Wales. They also address medium and longer term targets set out in the Nature Recovery Plan targets; To Increase the extent of native broadleaf and mixed woodland and trees under favourable management and Increase native broadleaf and mixed woodland, canopy cover, connectivity and resilience in North East Wales, while contributing towards resilient ecological networks.

NRAP Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Action 16. Continue to work with key departments to reduce the impact of climate change

No Progress	Some Progress	Good Progress

Flintshire County Council has a published Climate Change Strategy available to view here
https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Climate-Change/Climate-Change-Strategy-2022-2030.pdf

Biodiversity staff and members of the Access and Natural Environment Department were fully involved in the development of the strategy and are now represented on the various officer forums for plan delivery.

A key land use ambition within the strategy is to increase carbon absorption and maintain biodiversity within our land assets. Areas of work covered in the strategy include; Increase the proportion of council land managed for biodiversity, Undertake a study identifying land for habitat restoration and tree planting schemes within land assets to mitigate climate change and enhance biodiversity, Audit the amount of herbicide and pesticide use on Council land assets, Increase proportion of Council land with reduced mowing, Support the increase of tree canopy cover across the county in line with the Urban Tree and Woodland Plan, Assess impacts of Ash Dieback and tree planting within Flintshire assets on canopy cover and net carbon sequestration, Increase area with reduced mowing regimes to enhance biodiversity and increase carbon storage, Strengthen the monitoring of sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) installation and quality in new developments. Work is ongoing across these areas and biodiversity staff will be actively involved in the delivery of actions within the strategy which will deliver for climate change and biodiversity.

The many areas of work outlined throughout this report will support enhance and deliver for the Climate Change Strategy in addition to the Section 6 duty.

Action 17. Promote and enable greener development

No Progress	Some Progress	Good Progress

Our County Ecologist works to enable greener development across the council and ensure that important species and habitats are protected.

Our first regional conference on greener development was postponed in March 2020 due to Covid. This has now been re-scheduled for Nov 2022 with speakers from Welsh government and national experts on Green infrastructure.

As a collaborative piece of work with the nature partnership we are exploring how else we can support greener development across the north east Wales region.

Action 18. Work in partnership to limit the impact of INNs on local biodiversity

Objective 4 Supporting Nature in Flintshire stated:

Where we need to be in 2023:

- *Climate action is led, coordinated and supported by a cross departmental group*
- *Improved levels of nature consideration and inclusion across all new development*
- *We are involved in effective partnership work to minimise the impact of invasive species*

Objective 4: 2023 Reporting comment

- We have successfully integrated biodiversity action within the Climate Change Strategy, it will be essential to have widespread and high level ambition and support to ensure successful implementation of the strategy.
- While we have had historical and long term active and effective partnerships to control inns, this is an area which requires further input , the North Wales Wildlife Trust have a large regional grant funded project for INNS and it will be important to strengthen those links going forward.

No Progress ＞ **Some Progress** ＞ Good Progress

Non-native species impact and control is a significant and increasing area of work.

Biodiversity staff work in partnership across the authority particularly with Streetscene, Rights of Way, Housing and Customer services to provide advice and guidance with regard to invasive species as appropriate. Where invasive species are identified on Flintshire County Council land we will work with departments to undertake the appropriate control which is often long term treatment.

The majority of additional invasive non-native control work relies on volunteer involvement and events, these events faced cancellation and major disruption in 2020/21 due to Covid. Through collaboration with the North Wales Wildlife Trust, some management for key projects (E.g. Controlling Himalayan balsam along the River Alyn) was undertaken by their staff when it was safe to do so.

NRAP Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

Action 19. Monitor and evaluate action

No Progress ＞ **Some Progress** ＞ Good Progress

Action to date has been recorded through internal plan reporting and grant funding reports.

We also monitor biodiversity on the ground. Flintshire County Council is part of the North East Wales Great Crested Newt monitoring program, monitoring 104 ponds for their populations of Great Crested Newt annually working in partnership with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation and Natural Resources Wales.

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In 2020 we began to use interactive mapping to track and evidence change in addition to the above

For Objective 5 Supporting Nature in Flintshire stated:

Where we need to be in 2023:

- *We will have a platform where we can share appropriate environmental data across the regional nature partnership.*
- *We will be able to evidence change and understand what the best action is and where and when to undertake it to focus resources we have.*
- *We will be using a spatial nature recovery action plan to inform action*

Objective 5: 2023 Reporting comment

- We have created a regional information platform through the nature partnership website, it now hosts information about the partnership, our nature recovery action plan and targets, the wide range of projects being delivered across the region and mapped habitat data. There is still work to do to broaden the spatial data available on the site. It is anticipated that the regional officer will progress this work when they are in post before 2023.
- We have seen the benefit of monitoring project progress using our spatial data, as we go forward we will be able to use this data to compare and evidence habitat change.
- Increased capacity as a result of additional biodiversity staff will allow for increased project evaluation and monitoring.

reports. This will allow a more effective level of post project monitoring. Through 2022 we have been developing our use of mapping platforms to monitor and evaluate action.

There is also a requirement to report on actions in the Council Plan through the internal system InPhase And through the Climate Change Strategy groups.

NRAP Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

Action 20. Ensure sufficient capacity and resources to comply with the duty

No Progress	Some Progress	Good Progress

In 2022 the nature partnership completed a 3 year project to improve its effectiveness, visibility and sustainability. This provided the regional network needed to support local authority and other member action. Through this project the Biodiversity officer gained grant funding to increase hours to full time. In

Objective 6 Supporting Nature in Flintshire stated:

Where we need to be in 2023:

- *Have a strong and effective local and regional network which has well-coordinated and effective communication with national forums.*
- *We need a local structure which is effective, stable and supports our commitment to continued action to halt nature loss and creates a workplace where environmental consideration and nature based solutions are mainstream.*

Objective 6: 2023 Reporting comment

- Whilst we have successfully recruited two additional biodiversity members of staff, these positions are grant funded and fixed short term.
- It will be essential to extend this support and build on it through the 2023 reporting period to ensure effective delivery of growing environmental commitments for biodiversity staff.
- The recruitment of a regional nature partnership officer before 2023 will improve the regional network.

2020/2021 this was complimented by additional grant funding to contract temporary part time support to deliver specific grant funds. While this is not a long term solution it provides a short term structure for effective delivery of commitments in Flintshire.

In 2022 WG grant funding provided additional revenue funding to continue the uplift in hours of the Biodiversity officer and recruited two additional Biodiversity officers on short term temporary contracts. The key role for these positions is delivering projects under the Local Places for Nature funding plan but they will also support outcomes to fulfil our statutory duty, undertake survey and monitoring, publicity and promotion and events.

Grant revenue will also contribute towards a regional nature partnership officer who will be able to lead on regional conservation collaboration.

Review of s6 duty

Key issues regarding the operation of the s6 duty in your organisation, and the change this has engendered in delivery of biodiversity action, are outlined in the notable or continuing negative impacts, and any barriers to action section within Highlights, Key outcomes and Issues earlier in this report.

Update and review of the Section 6 plan will follow the 2023 reporting round and take into account issues and possible additions which will be reflected in an updated version published within 2023.

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Supporting Nature in Flintshire

Our plan to maintain and enhance biodiversity under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

January 2020 - December 2023

CYNGOR
Sir y Fflint
Flintshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Foreword

Nature is in deep crisis, 2020 marks the year our nation has failed to meet almost all of the international biodiversity commitments which were set 10 years ago. The continual downward spiral in the health of our natural world demonstrates the need to change the way we live and make business decisions. The wellbeing of future generations will depend on our action now.

At Flintshire County Council serving our community is central. We know that our communities want first class local services and we want to ensure that our environment is protected and enhanced while we carry out these functions. We understand how important the health of our environment is and how closely it is linked with the wellbeing and happiness of our communities.

The Covid-19 crisis has put many public services under huge pressure but it has also highlighted to many the value of our natural world, we have all had to find new ways of working and many of these are positive for our environment and will be adopted permanently as we emerge from the crisis.

We understand at Flintshire County Council that we are in a key position and moment when we can lead the way in nature recovery and support understanding and action across our communities.

Councilor Carolyn Thomas
Deputy Leader Flintshire County Council

Complying with our Section 6 Biodiversity Duty Under the Environment Act

20 Actions for nature

Delivering a greener council and supporting community wellbeing

Contents

Summary

Nature is our planet's life support system and consequently essential for human survival. Our natural environment provides our food, water, air, building materials, medicines and landscape. Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth and biodiversity loss continues as a direct result of human impacts, through habitat loss and degradation, over exploitation, pollution, climate change and invasive non-native species.

Welsh Government recognise all the benefits that are provided by plants, animals microorganisms and the places where they live and are aiming to reverse the decline of biodiversity in Wales with a ground breaking new framework of legislation.

As a Local Authority we have a duty to function sustainably and lead by example to protect and enhance our natural environment. Flintshire County Council have many areas of responsibility which can impact on the natural environment and we have the authority to ensure we function in a way which ensures the protection and recovery of nature. This way of working goes hand in hand with effective action against climate change.

To meet the challenge of reversing the decline in biodiversity it is essential that we act now and ensure as a local authority we meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Between 2002 and 2008 less than half of our most important SPECIES IN WALES were considered stable or increasing

Wales did not meet the 2010 biodiversity targets

Globally we will fail to deliver the 2020 targets

2016-19 Biodiversity Section 6

Plan progress report: Dec 2019

Supporting Nature in Flintshire is our second plan for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in Flintshire. We made good progress in 67% of the target areas under our 2016-2019 plan and are progressing our work in 2020 in a stronger position having continued to secure a number of grants for action for nature and to increase our Biodiversity Officer position to full time. Flintshire have been instrumental in ensuring the continuation of the Regional Nature Partnership (Bionet) which will be an essential tool in the development of a Local Nature Recovery Action Plan, in implementing targets from the National Nature Recovery Action plan, priorities from the Area Statements and wellbeing objectives.

Our plan is ambitious. It will involve working across council departments, driving change which will have multiple benefits and promoting new ways of thinking and working. There will be particular links with the Carbon reduction program and the emerging priority area of climate change.

Poor Progress
21%

Good Progress:
Further Work Needed
23%

No Progress
12%

Action Complete
44%
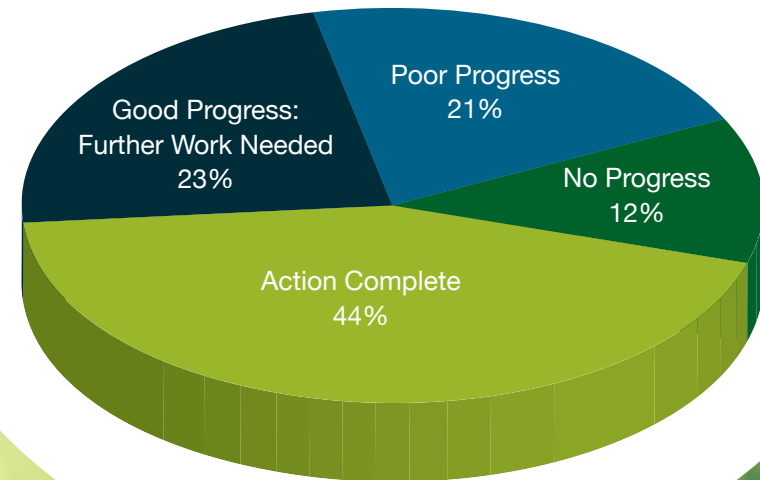
Why do we need a plan?

Supporting Nature in Flintshire has been produced in response to the enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The Act requires that Public Authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems.

To comply with the Section 6 duty, a Public Authority must have regard to:

- The Section 7 list of habitats and species of principle importance for Wales
- The State of Nature Report published by Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
- Any Area Statement which covers all or part of the area in which the authority exercises its functions, once these are produced
  and
- Must prepare and publish a Sect. 6 delivery plan and report on plan progress every 3 years

Supporting Nature in Flintshire outlines how, as an organisation, we plan to address our biodiversity duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

There are strong links between the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

All major threats to nature including; climate change, over-exploitation, habitat loss, pollution, land management and invasive species can be addressed by living more sustainably which is at the heart of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Complying with the Section 6 duty will help us maximise our contributions to the Well-being goals and will also support delivery of other key plans and policies. Linked national, regional and local legislation, plans and policies are outlined below.

National	Regional	Local
Well-being of future generations (Wales) Act 2015	Area Statements	Council Plan 2020 -2023
Environment (Wales) Act 2016	Nature Recovery Action Plan	Well-Being Plan
Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales		Carbon Reduction Programme
Climate Emergency Declaration		Urban Tree & Woodland Plan
Action Plan for Pollinators		Environment & Sustainability Policy

Why do we need to support nature in Flintshire?

Flintshire is a county of contrasts. Set between the rural counties to the west and the more developed areas of Cheshire and Merseyside, land use varies from intensive industrial development along the Dee estuary through to remote and wild areas on the Clwydian range. The moorland, coast and woodland are important to all who live, work and visit the County.

The Clwydian Range, designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, lies in the west of Flintshire, here Coniferous forests are prominent and although areas are managed for agriculture, much of it is still covered by a mosaic of heath, heather and gorse. Our only areas of deep peat in the county are in the Clwydian range. Peatland habitats can play an important role in water management, slowing down flood waters and naturally reducing flood-risk downstream. By slowly releasing water during dry periods, peatland helps to reduce the impact of droughts on water supplies and on river and stream flows.

Nature is being lost across the whole of Wales and Flintshire is no exception. Over the decades, Flintshire has undergone significant transformation.

Impacts are evident on our Dormouse population where average positive survey records across our sites has reduced by 94% indicating a population which has plummeted. Another small mammal the water vole is the UKs fastest declining mammal and in Flintshire is now only found in specific pockets of suitable habitat.

The widespread loss of natural habitats through development, agriculture, housing, infrastructure, industry and mineral extraction is significant and there are new threats including pests and diseases such as Ash Dieback which is likely to greatly impact on the Ash trees across the County.

Despite this Flintshire does still retain many places that are of importance for wildlife in urban and rural areas and there is now more evidence than ever, that these natural places are also incredibly important for human well-being.

The Well-being Plan for Flintshire reports "that people living, working and visiting Flintshire, place a high value on the natural environment and want to use it more for their own wellbeing"

Nature in Flintshire

The broad distribution of habitats in Flintshire is shown in the map below.

Legend

- ■ Woodlands
- ■ Mountains, moorland, heath
- ■ Seminatural grassland
- ■ Enclosed farmland
- ■ Coastal margins
- ■ Open water, wetlands & floodplains
- ■ Urban / Not habitat
- ■ Marine (estuaries)

Natural Resources Wales
https://envsys-ltd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=f8741b82f4974486ae3ad0ddd8285692

Award winning mitigation at a development site in Buckley has increased the Great Crested Newt Population on site by over 1000%

Grassland and Commons

Many of the commons within Flintshire are important for wildlife. The Halkyn Common Special Area of Conservation (SAC) was formed over glacial deposits and 350 million year old limestone, creating a unique habitat and the largest resource of Calaminarian grassland in Wales. Nationally uncommon species such as the lead-tolerant spring sandwort are abundant as a result of the long history of metalliferous mining in the area.

The commons in the more urban areas also provide important diverse habitats. The network of ponds, wetland and scrub areas on Lower Common, Buckley are particularly important as breeding sites for frogs and newts and form part of the Deeside and Buckley Newt Sites SAC.

Flintshire is one of the key counties in Wales for the Great crested newt, they will often favor rural farm ponds, old quarries and derelict land in urban settings.

Woodlands and Trees

Woodlands cover 8.8% of the county, well below the Wales average of 14%. It is characterised by small blocks of farm woodland and some rural estates, as well as larger forest blocks, such as Nercwys and Moel Famau in the south of the county. Woodland forms an important habitat component in the wider countryside and within protected sites. For example Alyn Valley Woods SAC which follows the river Alyn from Loggerheads to Rhydymwyn is designated for its broadleaved woodland on limestone and wet alder woodland. Much of the Deeside and Buckley newt sites SAC is woodland which is important terrestrial habitat for Newts and Wepre Woods in Connahs Quay is designated for the sessile oak woodland present.

In 2018 we launched our Urban tree and woodland plan, the plan sets a target of achieving an urban canopy cover of 18% by 2033, an increase from the current 14.5%, the seventh lowest in Wales. It's a 15 year plan which sets out an integrated approach to planting on all types of council land.

Tree planting and natural regeneration (where appropriate) will be an important part of creating resilient ecological networks. It is essential that "The right tree in the right place" policy is followed when planning tree planting. This will prevent any loss of other important habitats (such as wetland or grassland) and will ensure that the trees provide maximum benefit into the future.

In the year 2019/2020 we planted over 6000 trees

Rural and Urban Green Infrastructure

There are many undesignated sites and scattered fragments of habitats which have nature conservation value and are essential for nature. This forms our green infrastructure. It includes streams and small pockets of wet woodlands, old hedgerows, acting as corridors for wildlife in otherwise species-poor fields; ancient woodlands hosting hundreds of species including bluebells. Combined these habitats provide for our more common and rare species such as Sand Lizards, Natterjack toads, Bats, Dormice, Otter, Great Crested Newts and thousands of wading birds on the Dee Estuary.

Most urban areas within the County incorporate informal 'green space' which is important for wildlife and recreation. Many of these are the legacy of old industrial or mineral workings which have developed natural flora and are the home for numerous insect species. Greenfield Valley, Holywell and Wepre Park, Connah's Quay are particularly valuable 'wild spaces'. The map to the right shows the different types of urban green infrastructure across Flintshire.

- Golf Course
- Sports & Recreation Areas

Green Assets - Food Space
- Allotments

Green Assets - Civic Space
- Cemetery

Green Assets - Blue Space
- Lakes, Reservoirs, Ponds

Green Assets - Green Space
- Coastal
- Access Land
- Amenity Green Space
- Commons

Protected Sites

Flintshire contains a high number of international, national and local nature conservation designations.

The saltmarsh, sand dune and mudflat habitats of the Dee Estuary are not only important in their own right, but host internationally important populations of wildfowl and waders and are designated internationally as Special Protected Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and RAMSAR wetland site of international importance. Other internationally designated sites include the Alyn Valley Woods SAC, Deeside and Buckley Newt Sites SAC and Halkyn Mountain SAC.

In total the County hosts over 23 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and over 300 locally designated wildlife sites.

These contain sensitive habitats including coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (5% of the welsh resource), Lowland Calcareous grassland (17% of the welsh resource), Saltmarsh (12% of the welsh resource) heathland, reedbeds, calaminarian grassland, ponds and coastal sand dunes .

We have 23 nationally protected sites (SSSIs) in Flintshire Crested Newt Population on site by over 1000%

The last review of sssi in flintshire highlighted that 68% were in unfavourable condition

How will we measure progress?

Progress against the plan will be formally reported to Welsh Government after every three year period with a report published on our website. This is dictated by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Due to the cross cutting and integrated nature of the plan and the fact that the plan will deliver objectives for a number of Council areas, action under this plan will be measured and reported through a number of additional methods.

Regular progress reports will be received by the Flintshire County Council Environment working group. Actions will be reported quarterly through the Welsh Government funded Local Nature Partnership Cymru project. Flintshire County Council also sit on the Welsh Government Section 6 Task and Finish Group so action will be reported directly to Welsh Government at these meetings. Action will also contribute to the quarterly Council Plan reporting and reporting for the Well-being objectives.

Action will be measured by the outcomes produced, production of documents, the mapping of environmental assets or the mapping of change. Electronic survey methods and attendance and feedback from events and activities will also be used where appropriate.

Action to support nature in Flintshire

Actions in this plan are structured under the Welsh Governments National Nature Recovery Action Plan objectives, this is in line with guidance from Welsh Government.

All actions are in line with the sustainable development principles also known as the "5 ways of working" outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

• Long term
• Prevention
• Integration
• Collaboration
• Involvement

There will often be some overlap between the actions and objectives of various national and local plans and we work to ensure that these work streams complement each other.

Some of the actions in Supporting Nature in Flintshire, do directly link to the Council Plan and Wellbeing objectives. Where actions directly deliver for these plans it is indicated by the symbols below. Additionally much of our work is grant funded and can be a legal requirement but where specific actions in this plan are statutory or grant funded (For part of the plan duration) it is also highlighted.

ST Statutory
CP Council Plan
WB Well-being Plan
GF Grant Funded

Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

Current challenges:

Corporate change is needed to alter the impact of our actions on the natural world, ensuring the value of our natural world is recognised and understood will help initiate this change. As a public body we have the ability to influence how our own estate is managed, our residents understanding of the issue and our own processes and policies.

In Flintshire the large businesses and industrial areas highlight the need for private companies to also be performing sustainably and fully engaged in conservation objectives. There are many good examples of links between businesses and conservation work in Flintshire. These partnerships need to be built on and promoted. It is essential that biodiversity is considered and incorporated into design and discussions at an early stage to ensure our landscape can be both economically and environmentally prosperous.

Where we need to be in 2023:

- Considering the impact of decisions on the natural environment across all departments as standard and ensuring that decisions seek to promote and enhance nature wherever possible.
- Coordinating an influential and effective Regional Nature Partnership and creating opportunities for partnership working.
- Our staff understand the impact they can make on the natural world and are confident to suggest change to support continual improvements towards a sustainability.
- Supporting and promoting a strong understanding of the importance of nature across our communities.

Action 1 Engage key departments across the Council to support implementation of the Section 6 duty.

Action 2 Assess existing Council plans and policies for impact on biodiversity and influence where possible.

Action 3 Promote high level consideration of duty in Council documents.

Action 4 Ensure that environmental impact is considered through the procurement process.

Action 5 Continue to work in partnership to coordinate the regional nature partnership (Bionet) **GF**.

Action 6 Continue to develop and deliver projects with partner organisations and businesses.

Action 7 Continue to develop and deliver internal communication and training.

Action 8 Continue our role in educating residents and future generations about the importance of our natural environment.

Action 9 Continue to provide and expand our environmental volunteering opportunities **WB**.

Over 2500 people attended our environmental events in 2019

Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principle importance and improve their management

Current challenges:

Since 1970 in the UK 41% of species have decreased. In Wales we have seen changes where wildlife is found: 30% is found in fewer places. Across the whole of Wales protected areas are generally small and fragmented and are therefore vulnerable to management changes and the influence of surrounding land use. The last review 68% of SSSIs were in unfavourable condition and 71% of assessed habitat features are judged to be in unfavourable condition.

There are strong development pressures around important habitats in Flintshire and key European Great Crested Newt sites. The future of the species in Flintshire will be dependent on maintaining habitat connections through the developing landscape this is also vital for retaining a landscape and ecosystems which will be resilient in a changing climate.

Where we need to be in 2023:

• Have an effective, innovative and collaborative Nature Recovery Action Plan

Action 10 Publish a Nature Recovery Action Plan to inform and guide action for species and habitats of principle importance across Flintshire **GF**

Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation

Current challenges:

There are numerous issues which may undermine the resilience of our ecosystems; pressure from development for industry, housing and infrastructure, lack of available land that owners are willing to leave wild/enhance for nature. The spread of invasive non native species. Social pressures such as off-road motorcycling and anti- social behaviour including littering and fly tipping all place additional pressure on our ecosystems and their ability to cope with change.

Restoring, expanding and improving the condition of our natural habitats, as well as incorporating natural space into our new development is the key to making them more resilient and able to deliver a wider range of social, economic and environmental benefits.

Where we need to be in 2023:

Have a greener more biodiverse council estate which is well used and appreciated by residents.

Using accessible and efficient mapping technologies to inform action and evidence change

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Action 11 Green our Council estate and improve accessible green spaces for wildlife and people **CP WB**

Action 12 Achieve Bee friendly status **CP**

Action 13 Progress our cross department Wildflower campaign **CP**

Action 14 Progress our "Mapping to support nature recovery" project **GF**

Action 15 Continue to implement the FCC Urban tree and woodland strategy **CP**

Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Current challenges:

Climate change is one of the biggest threats to biodiversity. Impacts are already being seen across our species. Migratory birds are arriving and laying eggs earlier for example swallows are arriving 15 days earlier today than they did in the 1960s. The availability of sand eels has reduced which are a key food source for our sea birds. On average 10-12 new non native species become established in the UK each year and up to 20% of these can have serious adverse impacts. Pests and diseases also threaten our native species, The disease Ash dieback continued intensification of land management and urbanisation also have a dramatic impact on our nature.

Where we need to be in 2023:

- Climate action is led, coordinated and supported by a cross departmental group
- Improved levels of nature consideration and inclusion across all new development
- We have implemented planned ash dieback action and where possible minimised negative impacts on local nature
- We are involved in effective partnership work to minimise the impact of invasive species

Action 16 Continue to work with key departments to reduce the impact of climate change **CP WB**
Action 17 Promote and enable greener development **WB**
Action 18 Work in partnership to limit the impact of INNs and pests and diseases on local biodiversity

Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

Current challenges:

Our data on local regional and national species and habitats is limited and we do not have the capacity, time or resources to undertake complete habitat and species audits. Data is poorly shared between organisations which leads in inefficient working and missed opportunities. We need to focus on halting the decline of nature and we need to improve local action through effective monitoring and evidencing of project action.

Where we need to be in 2023:

- We will have a platform where we can share appropriate environmental data across the regional nature partnership.
- We will be able to evidence change and understand what the best action is and where and when to undertake it to focus resources we have.
- We will be using a spatial nature recovery action plan to inform action

Action 19 Monitor and evaluate action **ST**

Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

Current challenges:

Like many other public bodies we have work to do in raising the profile of the environment across our depts. We recognise that work is needed to embed environmental consideration and we will look to incorporate the environment across Local Authority policy and documents to allow consistency and clarity on our commitments to nature recovery.

Where we need to be in 2023:

- Have a strong and effective local and regional network which has well-coordinated and effective communication with national forums.
- We need a local structure which is effective, stable and supports our commitment to continued action to halt nature loss and creates a workplace where environmental consideration and nature based solutions are mainstream.

Action 20 Ensure sufficient capacity and resources to comply with the duty

References

- State of Nature Report 2019 https://nbn.org.uk/stateofnature2019/
- Flintshire County Council Council Plan https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Council-and-Democracy/Council-Plan.aspx
- Flintshire County Council Well-being Plan https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Council-and-Democracy/Council-Plan.aspx
- Flintshire County Council Urban tree and woodland Plan https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Countryside--Coast/Tree/Urban-Tree-and-Woodland-Plan.pdf
- North East Wales Green Infrastructure map: Cofnod 2018: Not published
- Broad habitat mapping: Natural Resources Wales https://envsys-ltd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=f8741b82f4974486ae3ad0ddd8285692
- Welsh habitat targets disaggregation report CCW 2007

Further Information

- For the full text of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/contents/enacted
- For guidance documents see: https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Environment-Wales-Act
- For the full text of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents/enacted
- For guidance documents see: https://futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/
- For further information on the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6 duty: https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Section-6
- For further information about the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 7 Habitats and Species of principle importance for conservation: https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Environment-Wales-Act
- Find the Regional Nature Partnership (Bionet) on social media at https://www.facebook.com/NEWBioNet/ and https://twitter.com/newbionet

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Sir y Fflint Flintshire COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	15 November 2022
Report Subject	Levelling Up Fund – Round Two
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Operational.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Announced at the Spending Review in 2020, the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) contributes to the United Kingdom (UK) Government levelling up agenda by investing in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets. The £4.8 billion fund is designed to realise a visible and tangible impact on people and places and support economic recovery.

This report updates on the development and submission of two bids in line with the bidding strategy agreed at Cabinet on 18 January 2022 and on a third strategic transport bid. The report provides an update on the programme as a whole and requests an allocation of match funding from the capital programme of £1,106,915 (£630,467 Alyn & Deeside bid, £476,448 Delyn bid) in order to draw down the UK Government funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That the progress in developing and submitting bids to round two of the UK Government Levelling Up Fund is noted.
2	That the risks and mitigations associated with the package of projects are noted.
3	That Members support the allocation of match funding of up to £1.107m from the capital programme in 2024/2025.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE LEVELLING UP FUND AND PROPOSALS FOR ROUND TWO
1.01	Announced at the Spending Review in 2020, the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) contributes to the levelling up agenda by investing in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the United Kingdom (UK), including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets. The £4.8 billion fund is designed to realise a visible and tangible impact on people and places and support economic recovery. The LUF provides a new approach to tackling health, social and economic inequalities and driving prosperity across communities that have been left behind.
1.02	Whilst every local authority can bid for LUF funding, the fund is especially intended to support investment in places where it can make the biggest difference to everyday life, including ex-industrial areas, deprived towns, and coastal communities. The UK Government has placed local authorities into categories 1, 2 or 3, depending on their identified level of need, with category 1 representing places deemed in most need of investment. Flintshire County Council ('the Council') has been identified as a 'category 2' local authority.
1.03	The LUF enables local authorities to apply for up to £20 million per parliamentary constituency. Bids above £20m and below £50m will be accepted for transport projects only (separate and in addition to the one bid per parliamentary constituency allocation). The LUF guidance encourages bids to include a local financial contribution representing at least 10% of total costs. Each bid can include a maximum of three projects.
1.04	Round two opened in May 2022 with a deadline in early August. In line with the bidding strategy, the Council submitted bids for the Alyn and Deeside and Delyn parliamentary constituencies for which more detail is provided below. In addition, the Council, working in partnership with Transport for Wales, resubmitted an amended set of proposals for investment in the Wrexham to Bidston railway line. This bid had been unsuccessful in round one of the programme but, following detailed feedback from UK Government, there was an opportunity to make a further submission.
1.05	The investment strategy agreed at Cabinet in January 2022 set out a series of potential interventions that demonstrate the Council's commitment to supporting our coastal communities, and, in particular, those wards identified as experiencing acute deprivation. Considerable work was done with all of the draft interventions between January and May 2022 to ensure that they were sufficiently well developed to demonstrate deliverability to UK Government. All potential interventions were robustly assessed to ensure that they had sufficiently strong business cases and risk management strategies and that they could be combined in each bid in a coherent and compelling way. This process reduced the number of interventions in each bid as set out below.

1.06	For Alyn and Deeside, the bid proposed three projects: 1) the redevelopment of Connah's Quay Docks and the construction of a new centre for the Sea Cadets; 2) improving sports and community facilities at the former Corus Social Club site Shotton; and 3) renovating the Clocktower in Sealand. £16.231m has been requested from UKG with £594k match required from FCC towards the Docks renovation only. Other projects have been required to provide their own match funding. In addition £36,344 is required from FCC as match towards the programme management costs
1.07	For Delyn, the bid proposed a single project to develop new industrial units on the Greenfield Business Park, the demolition of derelict units and the refurbishment of one tenanted unit. £14.64m has been requested from UKG with £440k match required from FCC. In addition £36,344 is required from FCC as match towards the programme management costs
1.08	UK Government has provided no indication of when the bids will be appraised and approved. It is expected that the bid process will be extremely competitive.
	Risks
1.09	The projects, despite the development work undertaken on them, all have substantial residual risks to be managed before they can be successfully delivered. In summary, these include: • UK Government expect expenditure through the programme to be complete by the end of March 2025. This is an exceptionally short timescale and most projects highlight delivery risks as a result. • Most projects still need to apply for and secure their consents and, in the case of the Sea Cadets and Greenfield Business Park proposals, flood risk adds uncertainty to this process. • Inflation is causing construction costs to rise rapidly which will impact on project viability. • Some of the third sector projects have not yet secured their match funding. • Some of the third sector projects need to provide further evidence to confirm the sustainability of the projects to enable the Council to manage any risks to public funds. • Lack of a timescale for approval from UKG creates uncertainty.
1.10	The Council has proposed robust management arrangements for the implementation of the programme as attached as Appendix 1. All projects will be subject to intensive support and monitoring to ensure that all residual risks are managed and that challenging delivery timescales are achieved. Gateway reviews will be used at key points in the development and delivery of each project to retain control.
	Match funding

1.11	As, highlighted above, the Council also needs to provide an element of capital funding in order to draw down the UK Government funding, should it be approved.

The Alyn and Deeside bid includes Council investment at Connah's Quay Docks, a vital community, visitor and business resource. The Docks, which comprise the "modern" dock infrastructure, the listed historic dock, and associated public realm, are largely in Council ownership. A masterplan has been developed to improve the Docks for businesses, local people and visitors.

The project will:
  • Remove contaminated silt from the historic dock and restore it.
  • Improve the public realm around the site to improve its appearance for visitors and businesses and improve security to reduce the problems of anti-social behaviour, crime and prostitution that occur.
  • Fully assess the condition of the modern dock and undertake needed stabilisation and improvement works to maintain integrity, improve security, promote business use and improve dockside management.
  • Create a new slipway facility for water users.

This will:
  • Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in a significant hot spot.
  • Ensure that the Council does not face unbudgeted future liabilities from dock infrastructure repairs.
  • Reduce safety issues associated with the current dock infrastructure – access ladders, substandard slipway, uncertain loading capacity of dock wall, potential underwater hazards.
  • Improve the site for local people and visitors.
  • Improve conditions for local businesses.

The total project cost is estimated as £8.28m. The Alyn and Deeside bid would require £630k of match funding from FCC.

The Delyn bid includes Council investment at Greenfield Business Park which will:
  • Demolish two vacant and derelict commercial units and replace with new small commercial units.
  • Clear vacant commercial land at the rear of the site and create new commercial units
  • Refurbish Unit 58.
  • Improve the goods and logistics space used by Unit 47 which is significantly problematic operationally currently.

This will:
  a) help to safeguard 438 skilled and secure jobs in one of Flintshire's most deprived communities;
  b) create space for an estimated 194 new jobs to come to Greenfield; and
  c) create new units with an estimated annual rental income of up to £300k. |

The total project cost is estimated as £16.264m. The Council would be required to provide £476k in match funding from the capital programme to secure this funding.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Any successful LUF bids will require: a) Match funding from the capital programme for 2024/2025. For the Alyn and Deeside bid, based on the value of the bid, this is £630k. For the Delyn bid, this is £476k. These values also include the match funding required to draw down the management costs for the programme. b) Staff resources to deliver the programme. A core team of delivery staff are fully costed into the bids submitted to UK Government. Additional staff resources required to support delivery can't easily be quantified but will be essential to deliver the two Council projects against challenging timescales.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	**Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact**

Long-term	These proposals form part of a long term strategic approach to manage the coastal area of Flintshire for the benefit of the economy, Flintshire residents and the environment.
Prevention	The market failures identified in this report will have long term social, economic and environmental impacts if left unaddressed.
Integration	The proposed approach outlined in this report integrates activities by the private sector, voluntary sector and public bodies.
Collaboration	The proposed approach involves a wide range of stakeholder in each locality working together towards a shared vision.
Involvement	There has been and will be further consultation with stakeholders in each locality.

Well-being Goals Impact

Prosperous Wales	The proposals in this report focus strongly on improving the economic assets in coastal Flintshire.

	Resilient Wales	There are a number of community-led interventions included in this report which help to address the market failures highlighted.
	Healthier Wales	No impact.
	More equal Wales	The proposals in this report target the most deprived communities in Flintshire and seek to improve the physical environment and economic opportunities they rely upon.
	Cohesive Wales	No impact.
	Vibrant Wales	No impact.
	Globally responsible Wales	There are a number of interventions in this report which will renovate or replace commercial properties and improve their environmental performance.

Risk management

Risk	Mitigation
Match funding availability	Each bid requires a minimum of 10% match funding. Match funding will need to be identified from private and public sources and was not secured at the point of bid submission. Work will continue on securing match funding after bids have been approved.
Intervention deliverability	The short timescale for the development of the interventions means that not all information about every intervention was available at the point of bid submission. All approved projects will have robust milestones and gateway reviews put in place to manage deliverability risks.
Consents	Few interventions had consents in place at the point of bid submission. The timelines for securing consents are included in the plans for each intervention. These risks will be included in the gateway review processes highlighted above.
Cost over-run	The interventions in this report were not at final design stage at the point of bid submission so there will be considerable cost fluidity. All interventions include a larger contingency budget than normal to mitigate this risk. In addition, at the point of delivery, excess cost at the procurement stage may lead to interventions

		being terminated or redesigned rather than incur additional financial pressures.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Ward members in the target areas have been consulted. A wider consultation with the community took place early in 2022 as well as detailed consultation with the businesses and communities directly impacted by the proposals.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – LUF programme management arrangements.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	**Contact Officer:** Niall Waller (Enterprise and Regeneration Manager) **Telephone:** 01352 702137 **E-mail:** niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
	LUF (Levelling Up Fund) – UK government programme investing in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets. Match funding – a financial contribution towards the costs of delivering a project.

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X J - 'CONNECTING COASTAL COMMUNITIES' – DELYN - LUF PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Cabinet (6 monthly standing agenda item)
Function: Oversight of council match funding spend and ensuring strategic alignment across all programmes relating to coastal communities
Remit: Decision-making power to make major changes to programme plan (subject to UK Government approval). Final point of escalation for programme risks and issues.
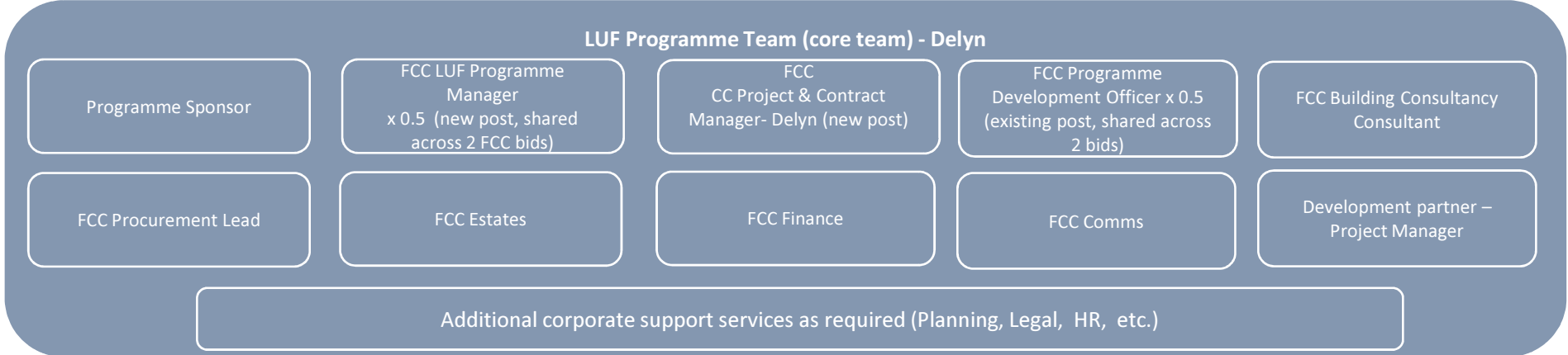
Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (6 monthly standing agenda item)
Function: To provide oversight and scrutiny of programme performance, spend and benefits realisation.
Remit: Appraise 6 monthly programme update reports

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Chief Officer Team (quarterly standing agenda item)
Function: Monitor progress and act as point of resolution for escalated risks and issues from LUF Programme Board. Ability for Chief Officer Team members to resolve risks and issues in between meetings.
Remit: To appraise quarterly progress, spend and risks reports, including delivery plan and financial spend analysis. To intervene/resolve programme level issues escalated by Programme Board.

Planning, Environment and Economy Programme Board - (quarterly standing agenda item)
Function: Internal non-decision making body responsible for monitoring and scrutinising the effective management of change, in conjunction with other capital based projects relating to coastal communities.
Remit: To receive quarterly progress and risks reports, including delivery plans and financial spend analysis. To oversee M&E process and monitor benefits realisation.

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LUF Programme Board (monthly) - Alyn & Deeside and Delyn (2 separate bids)
Function: Directly manage implementation of all aspects of LUF programme. Active management of delivery plans, procurement activity, contract management and M&E process. Active monitoring of progress/spend and management of risks and issues. Escalating risks and issues by exception
Remit: Operational accountability for all aspects of programme delivery, spend, monitoring and reporting. Risk and issue ownership.

Monthly contract management meetings – Programme Sponsor, Programme Manager, Project & Contract Manager & Development Partner Project Manager

LUF Programme Team (core team) - Delyn

Programme Sponsor	FCC LUF Programme Manager x 0.5 (new post, shared across 2 FCC bids)	FCC CC Project & Contract Manager- Delyn (new post)	FCC Programme Development Officer x 0.5 (existing post, shared across 2 bids)	FCC Building Consultancy Consultant
FCC Procurement Lead	FCC Estates	FCC Finance	FCC Comms	Development partner – Project Manager

Additional corporate support services as required (Planning, Legal, HR, etc.)

External Monitoring and Evaluation partner

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ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 15 November 2022
Report Subject	Shared Prosperity Fund
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) will deliver £2.5bn of investment until March 2025 across the UK. The aim of the programme is "to build pride in place and increase life chances". United Kingdom (UK) Government have allocated £126m to North Wales to deliver the programme between 2022/2023 and 2024/2025, with £10.8m allocated to Flintshire for the core programme.

This report provides an update on the development of the programme management infrastructure, both locally and regionally, and sets out recommended priorities for the programme, as well as criteria by which projects seeking funding through the programme will be assessed.

Finally, the report provides a broad update on the strategic Council projects that are under development in readiness for the programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	Members are asked to note the progress made in developing the SPF programme both regionally and locally.
2	Members are asked to review and support the broad outline of the structures and processes to be used to deliver the programme.
3	Members are asked to review and support the proposed outline uses of 2022/2023 funds by the Council.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	**Explaining the Shared Prosperity Fund**
1.01	The guidance for the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) programme was released on 13 April 2022. The programme is to be managed by local government across the UK. Funding is allocated to local government and no competitive bids are expected. A regional Investment Strategy setting out the approach to delivering the programme in North Wales was submitted to UK Government on 1 August 2022. UK Government have given no clear indication of when investment strategies will be approved.
1.02	The Shared Prosperity Fund will deliver £2.5bn of investment until March 2025 across the UK. The aim of the programme is "to build pride in place and increase life chances". The investment priorities set by UK Government are: • Community and Place - Strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging. To build resilient and safe neighbourhoods. • Supporting Local Business - Creating jobs and boosting community cohesion by supporting local businesses. Promoting networking and collaboration and stimulating innovation and growth. Targeted support to help businesses grow - e.g. innovation, productivity, energy efficiency, low carbon and exporting. • People and Skills - Boosting core skills and support adults to progress in work. Supporting disadvantaged people to access the skills they need. Funding local skills needs and supplementing local adult skills provision. Reducing levels of economic inactivity and supporting those furthest from the labour market. In addition to this "core" programme, there is funding to deliver the Multiply programme which is targeted solely towards accredited training for adult numeracy. There are ongoing discussions with UK Government, Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association about this latter programme as the criteria are felt to be overly restrictive and adult numeracy is a devolved area with existing Welsh Government programmes already in place.
1.03	UK Government have indicated the following allocations for Flintshire: Core programme 2022/2023 - £1,271,226.72 2023/2024 - £2,753,521.03 2024/2025 - £6,815,430.26 **Total - £10,840,178.00** Multiply programme (described above) - £2,262,755 over the same period. The programme will be administered by Gwynedd County Council on behalf of the six North Wales local authorities, but the final decision on the allocation of funds locally will rest with each Council.

1.04	In preparation for the submission of the Investment Strategy, each local authority held consultation events locally to identify priorities for the programme. In addition, regional events were held to identify regional skills and employment priorities. The local priorities identified by stakeholders were: • Support for town centre regeneration and street markets • Creating and improving green spaces and green infrastructure • Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities • Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups • Contributing to tackling cost of living crisis • Improving digital infrastructure • Improving tourist facilities • Support for business innovation, learning and decarbonisation • Supporting social businesses • Providing support to those furthest from labour market • Meeting local business skills needs • Support for young people post-Covid • Tackling mental ill-health These priorities are consistent with the priorities of the Council Plan and the Flintshire Wellbeing Plan. It is proposed that, during the assessment process outlined below, projects that address these are prioritised for investment.
	Delivering the Shared Prosperity Fund programme
1.05	Gwynedd County Council have been nominated as the lead accountable body for the programme in North Wales. In advance of UK Government approval for the programme, officers from the six authorities have been preparing the systems needed to allocate and manage funds from the programme.
1.06	It is intended that, in line with UK Government expectations, most funds allocated through the programme will be issued through open and competitive bidding processes where potential project sponsors submit their proposals for consideration. Councils also have the ability within the programme to directly spend money without going through this process, but it is intended that is reserved for four scenarios: 1) Approval for the programme will be received very late in this financial year. It is therefore proposed that the Council directly spends 2022/2023 funds without a competitive process to avoid underspending the allocation. 2) If insufficient proposals are received through the open call for proposals then the Council could opt to directly deliver projects to avoid programme underspends in 2023/2024.

	3) If the proposals received do not cover some of the priorities identified above then the Council could develop projects for direct delivery to fill the gap in provision.
	4) If an urgent and strategically vital project were identified, the Council could choose to allocate uncommitted programme funds to its delivery.
1.07	It is intended that the project selection process will only support larger strategic projects. Across North Wales, even an average project value of £1m would still result in 120 projects to be administered which would require most of the available programme management resource. To enable a wider benefit for the programme, potential applicants will be asked to consider creating grant schemes within their strategic projects which would allow smaller voluntary groups and businesses to apply for support. This will reduce the administrative demands upon smaller organisations accessing the programme.
1.08	The final decision on all project allocations will rest with each local authority. In line with UK Government expectations, each County will have a multi-agency partnership (or panel) to advise on the selection of projects and the management of the programme. In Flintshire, it has already been agreed at Cabinet that the Economic Recovery Group will act in this capacity and the membership and terms of reference of the group has been amended to enable it to fulfil this role.
1.09	The detailed criteria and processes to approve allocations of funding are being developed both locally and regionally. The criteria and processes will need to be amended over time based on programme management requirements.
	It is expected that each project proposal will need to demonstrate:
	- its ability to meet the UK Government criteria for the programme and deliver outcomes from the programme framework; - fit with local needs and that it will complement and not duplicate existing local provision; - thorough engagement with local stakeholders and potential beneficiaries; - its contribution to meeting the strategic needs of the area as set out in the Council Plan, Wellbeing Plan and other relevant strategies; - deliverability within the short timeframe for the programme; - the experience and capability of the project sponsor; - an ability to identify and manage risks effectively; - value for money, match funding availability and confirmation that the project can't be funded elsewhere; - that UK Government subsidy control regulations can be complied with; and - that delivery will take account of equality duties, the Welsh language and environmental good practice.
	Due to the relatively small scale of the programme it is proposed that large capital build projects, although technically eligible, are not supported.

	Capital expenditure as a smaller element within a wider revenue-based project should be accommodated as should projects which disburse small capital grants or works across multiple communities, groups or businesses.
1.10	Council officers will operate the final assessment process for projects in Flintshire, with the Economic Recovery Group acting in an advisory capacity. The approval processes will operate in a co-ordinated manner across North Wales to ensure consistency and to enable projects wishing to operate in more than one county, especially those addressing skills and employment needs, to receive approval through a prompt and joined-up process. The Council will need to demonstrate the appropriate separation of roles between the officers undertaking the competitive assessment process for projects and those acting as project sponsors for Council projects.
1.11	Reports will be brought to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly cycle to highlight the allocation and expenditure of the programme, progress towards achieving targets and any significant risks and issues arising.
	Council projects
1.12	As highlighted above, the constrained timescale for the programme in 2022/2023 will make it challenging to deliver projects without risking underspending the finance allocated to this year. It is therefore intended that the Council will directly deliver projects in 2022/2023 to ensure that the funding allocated is used effectively. Projects to be delivered this year will still require endorsement from the Economic Recovery Group and will need to demonstrate their fit with the programme, with the priorities arising from the local consultation and with the strategic needs of the County. Projects are expected to include: • regeneration activity in towns and in its coastal area; • support for businesses and community groups to reduce energy use; • measures to reduce the impact of the cost of living crisis on residents; and • assistance for young people with increased educational support needs post-Covid and for them to enter employment;
1.13	The Council can bid for funding for projects for 2023/24 and 2024/2025 through the same competitive process as other organisations. Development of potential projects is currently underway and is expected to include strategic projects to: • further develop the Flintshire Coast Park; • support young people with education, employment and mental health;

	- support businesses and community groups to reduce their energy use and increase business skills to use new technologies and to network and learn together; - invest in the visitor economy infrastructure and support the use of heritage and cultural assets by local people and visitors; - improve digital connectivity for rural communities and for community facilities; and - invest in town centre regeneration and the development of markets.
	Next steps
1.14	UK Government approval of the programme is still awaited which adds uncertainty to the plan to implement it regionally and locally. The intention is to have programme documentation and processes ready for release in November/December so that projects can be invited, assessed and approved ready for the start of 2023/2024.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Four percent of the value of the programme can be drawn down by the regional lead body for programme governance, administration and monitoring and evaluation. Funds can be allocated from this sum to each local authority to cover programme management costs so the programme should not present an additional burden to Council finances.
2.02	Match funding is not required by UK Government for the SPF programme although it is intended that projects offering match funding will score better during the assessment process. The Council therefore does not face any additional financial pressures from the delivery of the programme.
2.03	Individual services submitting proposals for funding from the programme will need to plan the delivery and administrative resources needed to deliver and account for their projects effectively, some of this resource can be included within the eligible costs for each project.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT	
3.01	**Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact**	
	Long-term	The Council will prioritise projects that can demonstrate an impact beyond the two and a half year duration of the programme.
	Prevention	The Council will prioritise projects that can demonstrate that they address underlying issues rather than merely tackling their symptoms.
	Integration Collaboration Involvement	The Council has already held some consultation on the priorities for the programme. The Council will establish open calls for proposals so that a wide range of organisations can contribute to the

	delivery of the priorities. The Council will use the existing multi-sector Economic Recovery Group to provide oversight of the programme and link it to wider programmes and initiatives.
	The Council will prioritise projects that can demonstrate that they are integrated into wider local partnerships and programmes rather than established solely for the purpose of securing funding from this programme.

Well-being Goals Impact

Prosperous Wales	The Council will prioritise projects that can demonstrate that they address the Well Being Goals.
Resilient Wales	
Healthier Wales	
More equal Wales	
Cohesive Wales	
Vibrant Wales	
Globally responsible Wales	

Risk management

Risk	Mitigation
Recruitment The programme will require the Council to recruit a number of staff to manage and deliver the programme. Recruitment will be urgent due to the constrained timescale of the programme and the Council will be competing with every other Council in the UK for applicants.	This will be a strategic risk for the programme and for the majority of projects within it. There is no immediate mitigation possible but close monitoring will help the Council to take corrective action where it can. The regional administration of the programme reduces this risk to the Council by reducing the number of staff required locally.
Expectations The programme offers a relatively small resource compared to the breadth of the priorities it can deliver against. There is a risk that organisations whose priorities and projects are not prioritised will criticise the Council.	The Council will need to be clear from the earliest stages on the approach it will take to setting the priorities for the programme and on its delivery strategy including how it will invite and select proposals from third parties. Transparent criteria for this will be used wherever possible.
Multiply	

	The scale of the programme appears to be disproportionate to the unmet need in our communities and there is existing provision in place to meet these needs.	Further discussion at the strategic level on the approach needed to deliver Multiply and to seek greater flexibility to allow resources to be used more widely.

4.00	**CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT**
4.01	Consultation events were held with stakeholders in May 2022 as part of the development of the regional investment strategy. The Council met again with consultees in October 2022 to provide an update on the development of the programme and raise awareness of forthcoming funding opportunities.

5.00	**APPENDICES**
5.01	None.

6.00	**LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**
6.01	UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund prospectus https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus

7.00	**CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS**
7.01	**Contact Officer:** Niall Waller Enterprise and Regeneration Manager **Telephone:** 01352 702137 **E-mail:** niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
	Match funding – money provided by a project applicant towards the costs of delivering their project. Multiply – a mandatory element of the Shared Prosperity Fund programme to tackle adult numeracy. Shared Prosperity Fund – a funding programme from UK Government operating over the 2022-2025 financial years "to build pride in place and increase life chances".

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