

Public Document Pack

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Chief Officer (Governance)
Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



Contact Officer:
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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

1 February 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF HYBRID MEETING
ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY, 2023 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.

AGENDA

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 (E&E OSC) (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 CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT (Pages 17 - 50)

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

Purpose: To provide an update on progress within the climate change programme.

5 WOODLAND STRATEGY (URBAN TREE & WOODLAND PLAN AND FLINTSHIRE FOREST) (Pages 51 - 58)

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

Purpose: To provide an update on delivering the Urban Tree and Woodland Plan and to seek members views on developing a Flintshire Forest

6 WEPRE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN AND CHARGING (Pages 59 - 106)

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

Purpose: To present and agree the new Wepre Park management plan.

7 OPEN SPACES AND HIGHWAY MEMORIAL POLICY (Pages 107 - 114)

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

Purpose: To agree a new policy to deal with memorials and legacy requests within greenspaces and the countryside.

8 DWR CYMRU WELSH WATER DRAFT WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024 - PUBLIC CONSULTATION LAUNCH (Pages 115 - 122)

Report of Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) - Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection

Purpose: To make Members aware of the stakeholder consultation in progress, the issues raised by the plan, and to consider how the Council should respond

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 7 th February, 2023
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.

RECOMMENDATION

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	<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">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	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	In some cases, action owners have been contacted to provide an update on their actions.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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
7 March 2023 10.00 am	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	
	Local Toilet Strategy	To advise the committee on the approach and timescales for the statutory formal review of the Local Toilet Strategy	Pre-decision scrutiny	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
	Bereavement Services	To advise the committee on the services provided and challenges faced.	Assurance	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
	Presentation by Land & Property Programme Manager – NWEAB	To receive an update on the Land & Property Programme			
Thursday 23rd March 2pm	Parking outside Schools Meeting of Education, Youth & Culture OSC	To provide information on the traffic regulation process and enforcement provision (referred by the Environment &	Information Sharing	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation & Chief	

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
APPENDIX 1

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
	with members of Environment & Economy OSC to be invited to the meeting	Economy OSC)		Officer (Education & Youth)	
18 April 2023 10.00 am	Highways Drainage Housing regeneration grants & loans policy Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transition Plan Integrated Transportation Strategy Council Plan Development	To receive an update To consider the draft refreshed Housing Regeneration Grants and Loans Policy and to recommend approval to Cabinet. To consider the Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transition Plan To consider the Strategy To share the Council Plan 2023-28 Part 1 and Part 2 draft content for review/feedback prior to sign off at Cabinet	Assurance Pre-decision scrutiny Assurance Assurance Council Plan development	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) Niall Waller Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation Chief Officers	

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	Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO's) review	To review the current PSPO's prior to consideration by Cabinet.	Policy Review	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	
13 June 2023 10.00 am	Welsh Government Deposit Return scheme NWEAB Low carbon Energy (to be confirmed)	To receive an update	Assurance	Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation)	
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	

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Items to be added: -

March 2023 - Exceptions criteria for 20 mph implementation – Portfolio workshop

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 January 2023

Item/Date	Discussion	Action	By whom	Status
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 Briefing paper provided	Niall Waller	Completed
Minutes 14/09/21	Litter from food outlets	Update on Welsh Government initiative to be circulated when available. 10/1/23 Chief Officer requested to	Katie Wilby	Ongoing

		write to Welsh Government on behalf of the Committee to request an update.		
Minutes 10/1/23	Cllr Mike Peers requested a copy of the questions raised by Members during the Part 2 budget item considered at the December meeting.	Facilitator to check with relevant officers of the information could be provided to Members	Margaret Parry-Jones	Response awaited
Waste Strategy 10/1/23	Request for data on side waste enforcement.	Data on side waste enforcement to be provided to Members of the Committee	(Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation)	Response awaited
Waste Strategy 10/1/23	Suggestion that a leaflet be distributed to raise public awareness of the position regarding Target 70.	Consideration to be given a leaflet being distributed with Council Tax bills explaining the position with regard to Target 70 and the implications for the Council.	Chief Officer, Streetscene & Transportation	Ongoing
	Suggestion that landlords agree to pay for community bins at HMO properties as part of their licensing agreement	Chief Officer, Planning, Environment & Economy to speak to Cllr Debbie Owen regarding a suggestion that landlords agree	Chief Officer, Planning, Environment & Economy	Meeting arranged. Completed.

		to pay for community bins at HMO properties as part of their licensing agreement		
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Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting	7 th February 2023
Report Subject	Climate Change Strategy
Cabinet Member	Collective Responsibility
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

This report summarises the progress made in 2021/22 across the key themes within the strategy: Buildings, Mobility & Transport, Procurement, Land Use and Behaviour.

The total carbon emissions for 2021/22 saw a 1% increase on the 2018/19 baseline. All carbon emission sources have seen decreases beyond the percentage targets, aside from Procurement which saw a 24% increase. Emissions from this source are directly linked to spend value and therefore the current methodology is adversely affecting the Council's total carbon footprint.

Fleet transition to low carbon alternatives and provision of available EV charging infrastructure for Council fleet is progressing slowly. There is also a need to embed climate change and carbon reduction throughout the Council, and increased visibility and provision of training can achieve this.

Lastly, further developing efficient energy management within our buildings will enable continued reductions from this theme.

These areas need particular focus and revenue support over the coming year to accelerate decarbonisation and stay on track towards 2030 net zero carbon goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To receive the report and note its contents.
2	To support the improvement of internal communications to raise awareness of the Council's positive progress in moving to achieve its climate change ambitions.
3	To support the introduction of embedding carbon measures into procurement processes within a pilot portfolio of the Council.
4	To support the case for an Invest to Save post and resources to introduce Building Management Systems within more of our building assets to improve the management of energy use.
5	To support the embedding of climate change principles throughout the Council, through delivery of Carbon Literacy training to Elected Members, Senior Managers and other key decision makers.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REPORT
1.01	<p>Background:</p> <p>In 2019, the Welsh Government declared a Climate Emergency in Wales, accepting the recommendations from the United Kingdom (UK) Committee on Climate Change and further setting ambitious plans for the public sector to be net zero carbon by 2030. In December 2019 Cabinet resolved to develop a Climate Change Strategy which would set key aims and actions for creating a net zero carbon Council, and this strategy and action plan was adopted by Council in February 2022.</p>
1.02	<p>Purpose:</p> <p>This report provides an update on the progress that has been made on climate change from adoption of the Climate Change strategy in February 2022 – January 2023. During the 12 months of this reporting period, there has been focus on implementation of key projects while carrying out the necessary research and development needed to progress within other priority areas. The report compares the most recent carbon emission data (Apr 2021 – Mar 2022) against previous year's data, and explains areas of increase and decrease. The report then breaks down progress in each theme within the published Action Plan, and starts to indicate where Capital and Revenue resource is needed to further progress within these actions.</p>

1.03

The Climate Change strategy set out a milestone plan for key theme areas. Appendix 1 details the progress made against annual target emissions in order to stay on track with our net zero carbon goal.

This can be summarised in the table below:

Theme	2018/19 actual tCO ₂ e	2019/20 actual tCO ₂ e	2020/21 actual tCO ₂ e	2021/22 actual tCO ₂ e	2021/22 target (% reduction) tCO ₂ e
Buildings	10,747	10,262	9,971	8,543 (-13%)	9,004 (9%)
Mobility & Transport	6,716	6,542	5,479*	5,504 (-16%)	5,938 (9%)
Procurement	28,970	29,227	25,366	32,446 (+24%)	23,337 (8%)

*Due to records retained during the COVID pandemic, in 2020/21, the figures for employee commuting were not previously included. The data detailed above is an estimate.

The table details the reductions made in 2021/22 against the 2018/19 baseline. An increase in emissions has occurred in Procurement due to the increase in spend in 2021/22. All other key themes have seen carbon reductions as we evolve into new ways of working post pandemic.

The Climate Change Action Plan captures the actions needed across the Council in order to achieve Net Zero Carbon by the 2030 goal. The Action Plan is divided into 5 key themes: Buildings, Mobility & Transport, Procurement, Land Use & Behaviour. To monitor progress within each of these themes, Officer Working groups were established with representation from key stakeholders across the Council’s portfolios. This is a further way of embedding climate change into the Council, and Climate Change and Climate Adaptation actions continue to be included in the Council Plan.

There are 58 actions within the Action Plan that include both mitigation and resilience actions. This Action Plan is a working document that will be reviewed periodically as and when further intelligence is available to improve carbon reduction forecasts. The progress against this Action Plan is detailed in Appendix 2, and summarised below.

1.04

Buildings

We continue to invest in our buildings to improve their energy efficiency and subsequent carbon emissions. We have successfully secured Salix loans, Prudential borrowing, Welsh Government grants and utilised internal funds to carry out works across our estate including schools, industrial units and street lighting. These have included LED upgrades, improved insulation, and BMS (Building Management System) upgrades to improve management of energy. We also continue to invest in building mounted renewable energy to reduce the need for grid electricity by installing solar PV and wind turbines on schools and industrial units.

Due to these works we have seen a 3% decrease in heating from buildings, 37% decrease in electricity from buildings, and 44% decrease in electricity in street lighting.

	<p>Work has been underway in designing and developing the Council’s first Net Zero Carbon school and is again demonstrating leadership by piloting a Net Zero Carbon Care Home which will be one of the first in Wales.</p> <p>Rationalisation of assets continues as the Council moves out of the COVID pandemic and embraces new ways of working. The Asset Management Plan has been reviewed to reflect the Council’s carbon ambitions when building and land assets become available.</p> <p>Further opportunities exist to decarbonise our buildings and focussed resource needs to be made available to progress this in the coming year.</p> <p>The Council continues to provide energy advice and support to domestic properties – both Council tenants and private households. The team works to reduce the risk of fuel poverty and works with occupiers and contractors to fit energy reduction measures in homes including insulation, LED light bulbs, energy use meters, solar energy and improved heating systems such as air source heat pumps.</p> <p>In terms of economic strategy, place plans are being developed for each of our town centres over the coming year. These plans will help us to understand the regeneration needs within our urban communities and will consider carbon mitigation and adaptation and environmental impacts within these areas. The plans will give us a better understanding of our existing and potential assets and guide and shape decisions to ensure the county thrives and supports the wellbeing of our residents.</p>
1.05	<p>Mobility & Transport</p> <p>In 2021/22 we have seen a 51% decrease in Business travel, 11% decrease in employee commuting and 15% decrease in Fleet, compared to our 2018/19 baseline.</p> <p>The decrease in Business Travel and Employee Commuting can be attributed to the hybrid working patterns of the workforce coming out of the pandemic. The data for both of these areas has a reasonably high Relative Standard of Deviation (RSD) due to the methodology used to determine emissions. The RSD for this data can be reduced by improving the vehicle data we collect within our mileage travel claim forms for Business Mileage, and by surveying our employee base to determine methods of travel and average days travelled within Employee Commuting. This would also help us to better understand the impacts of home working on the Council’s carbon footprint. The provision of a salary sacrifice scheme for ULEV would also improve our emissions from these sources.</p> <p>The Council is working to understand the impacts of transition to alternative fuel vehicles with pilots of electric recycling vehicles and 2 electric buses introduced into the public service. These trials will allow us to understand the benefits and challenges associated with this transition, and better scope the network, infrastructure and training needed in order to transition while preventing any adverse effects to service provision.</p>

	<p>The largest impact in this area comes from our own Fleet. Work is being carried out to develop the Council’s EV Transition plan in line with the installation of EV charging points and the renewal of the Fleet contract. This project is one that has many contributing factors affecting a number of the Council’s portfolios. There are many aspects of this roll-out that could be detrimental to Council service provision if not completed correctly. Specific skills and knowledge are needed to progress and implement this plan across the Council – overseeing the operational aspects of location of charging points, managing vehicle routes, providing training on the use and care of electric vehicles, provision of ongoing maintenance, while ensuring all stakeholder parties are involved and engaged. The Council needs to invest in specific staff resource to manage the operational side of this transition to reduce the impact on Council service provision.</p> <p>We have invested in EV charging infrastructure to support the public transition to electric vehicles. Working with Swarco, the first phase of 15 public access EV charging points have been installed across the county within public car parks. Feasibility for further phases could see additional provision in well-identified locations.</p> <p>The Council continues to develop its active travel network across the county by identifying and bridging gaps in the network. The Welsh Government Bus Reform on franchising the Bus Network may impact on current plans around public transport.</p>
1.06	<p>Procurement</p> <p>In 2021/22 we saw a 24% increase in carbon emissions from supply chain. This increase directly correlates with a Council-wide increase in spend over 2021/22. The increase in spend is due to inflation rises and has been seen by many other public sector organisations.</p> <p>The Council has a responsibility to consider how we can incorporate climate change considerations into our procurement in a way that is proportionate and relevant and influences the market. Reducing emissions from procured goods and services is a significant part of our climate response.</p> <p>Procurement continues to be a contentious reporting figure due to being based on the value of goods and services procured. This will continue to fluctuate in line with Council spend and therefore be an unpredictable carbon emission source until we are able to demonstrate actual carbon emissions within contracts.</p> <p>Work is underway to include the requirement of a carbon plan in contracts over £5 million as per Welsh Government guidance. The biggest impacts will come from establishment of tender scoring criteria on carbon emissions from each contract. This will allow us to add carbon specific weighting to tendering processes and monitor the contract for the actual carbon emissions produced as a result of that service. These figures can then be reported as actual carbon emission figures in place of the contract value.</p>

	<p>The emissions from procurement are split into a number of categories and therefore we are able to pinpoint the key spend areas. These are: Social Care services, Construction, Education Services, and other Professional Services. We can focus on introducing carbon measures within these key spend areas to ensure high impact on carbon reduction within Procurement.</p> <p>The Procurement Strategy is being reviewed to incorporate the introduction of measures to weight contracts with consideration for the carbon impacts of the contract and collection of that carbon emission data. Engagement work will need to be undertaken with suppliers to guide them on our carbon ambitions and the requirement for this data, and Council officers will require training to understand the carbon impacts.</p> <p>Management of this process – working with Commissioning officers, our current suppliers and prospective suppliers to enable the collection of this data – is onerous and the Council needs to invest in a skilled staffing resource for this. Opportunities may be available to utilise a shared resource with our Joint Procurement partner Denbighshire County Council.</p>
1.07	<p>Land Use</p> <p>The Council continues to work on understanding both existing and potential benefits of its land assets. Cross departmental working is being utilised to effectively map land areas that have potential for improved carbon absorption, natural flood defence and biodiversity net gain. These attributes must be weighed against current land use and other land priorities. Key sites will be identified this year to progress feasibility.</p> <p>The Council has demonstrated leadership with further investment in renewable energy with the launch of two new solar farms potentially generating 3MW of electricity. This complements our existing solar farms and landfill gas generation, with solar farms now at former Flint landfill, Crumps Yard, Connahs Quay, and Standard Road and Brookhill Way, Buckley.</p> <p>In partnership with University College London (UCL) we have demonstrated the need to innovate by trialling hydro power at Wepre Park. This installation is a proof of concept for this technology in providing renewable energy for the Visitor Centre from water flow.</p> <p>By investing in these technologies, we can move Flintshire, and Wales as a nation, away from energy produced by burning of fossil fuels. Further opportunities exist to invest in large scale renewable energy schemes and focussed resource needs to be made available to progress this in the coming year.</p> <p>Municipal waste continues to be sent to Parc Adfer energy from waste facility in Deeside which can power more than 45,000 homes. Kerbside food waste is sent to the anaerobic digester and green waste is converted into compost at the Greenfield facility. Kerbside recycling waste is collected and recycled largely within the UK. Links with Flintshire</p>

	<p>Refurbs and other charities has improved the waste treatment of large household items and white goods. Items are collected at kerbside or set aside at Household Recycling sites and either repaired and reused or broken down into their component parts for recycling.</p> <p>The provision for recycling in Council buildings can be improved through audit and education, and on-demand collections of recyclables are being trialled at Schools.</p> <p>Due to these streams avoiding waste being sent to landfill, the carbon emissions within our baseline are those from fuel used by the Waste collection vehicles. These emissions will reduce once effective alternative fuel sources are available for these heavy use vehicles.</p> <p>In terms of further biodiversity management, we now have a network of 109 nature areas across the county that incorporate reduced mowing regime, wildflower seeding, etc, with 11.8ha of our grassland estate managed for wildflower diversity. There are still opportunities to extend this network through land mapping and engaging with both internal and external stakeholders. The benefits of this network extend beyond biodiversity and provide accessible and visible green space to improve wellbeing.</p> <p>Progress to increase tree canopy cover in line with the Urban Tree and Woodland Plan has been affected by storm damage and the continued issue of ash dieback. Ash dieback action plan is in place and tree works are being recorded and continued work with private landowners.</p> <p>Community food growing sites continue to receive improvements and further potential sites have been identified for consideration for food growing. There are currently 16 sites across the county covering over 3.8ha.</p>
1.08	<p>Behaviour</p> <p>In order to embed climate change, work has been undertaken to review and update key decision making tools within the Council. The Integrated Impact Assessment tool is used for compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and ensure due regard is given to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage, when taking strategic decisions. It incorporates Welsh Language impacts, environment and biodiversity, health impacts, etc. This tool now incorporates the impacts associated with carbon to ensure strategic decisions consider our carbon ambitions. Further review of this document is taking place to ease completion by the Officer while ensuring all of the impact criteria is met. The Business case template for Capital expenditure has been updated to incorporate the mandatory modelling of a best-case carbon and biodiversity positive option. This process allows Officers to effectively consider the reduced carbon options within the early business planning process. Further support will be given to Officers completing the new requirements within this document. The Council's Asset Management Plan has been reviewed and updated to give due consideration for carbon impacts related to our building assets as well as</p>

	<p>the consideration of land use to support carbon ambitions. The Procurement Strategy is also being reviewed as described previously.</p> <p>To further support the embedding of climate change across the Council, the former Climate Change Programme Board was formalised as a Climate Change Committee and a Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Economy was established. The Board has oversight on the delivery of the Strategy and its Action Plan.</p> <p>In embedding carbon within the decision making of Officers and Members, the first phase roll out of carbon literacy training has taken place. Carbon literacy training should be a mandatory requirement for Elected Members and Senior Managers across the organisation. Cost implications to the Council have been reduced by providing in-house delivery of a package developed by Carbon Literacy Project specifically for Local Authorities. Twenty Officers within the Themed Working groups have attended this training and feedback has been very positive. The next phase of training needs to focus on Elected Members and Senior Managers across the Council and budget and time allowance for this must be accounted for.</p> <p>The wider employee base would benefit from completion of a more basic introduction to climate change, and Flintshire Council is leading a regional public sector commission to facilitate the development of an e-learn module for this purpose.</p> <p>Steps have been taken in the transition towards a ‘paperless Council’ through provision of hardware for Members to enable access to Report Packs digitally. The default position is now that paper copies of reports are not sent out unless specifically requested. This process is still ongoing to identify further barriers to utilising digital report packs. Further engagement work to improve behavioural change across Officers and Members is needed. Other areas of paper use across the Council are being identified and reviewed in line with the Digital Strategy.</p>
1.09	<p>Reducing the Council’s carbon emissions alone – roughly 2% of the total emissions of the county - will not achieve the net zero Wales by 2050 goal, and the expectation is that we use our influence as a Local Authority to encourage local businesses, voluntary organisations, public services and the general public to work towards reducing their carbon emissions.</p> <p>We have developed a decarbonisation network for Deeside industrial area to develop aims and objectives and share good practice and are developing a toolkit for local businesses to calculate their carbon footprint and develop a carbon reduction plan.</p> <p>We have developed public facing ‘Climate Change’ pages within the Council’s website which are regularly updated with our progress and provide a resource for the public and Council employees. In November we launched the Climate Change e-newsletter with a subscription of over 900. The newsletter highlights key projects, useful information and</p>

	<p>upcoming local and national events. The 'Climate change' topic is now available for selection in the Flintshire Council subscription topics.</p> <p>The Climate Change Programme Communication and Engagement plan ensures that all stakeholder groups are engaged and informed through a variety of media. During COP Cymru in November 2021, the Council shared its good practice by presenting on the Flintshire Solar Farms and continued investment and leadership in renewable energy generation. During Wales Climate Week in November 2022 drop-in sessions were organised across the county providing energy saving advice, carbon footprint calculations and allocations of trees to Welsh households as part of the 'My Tree Our Forest' programme. Plans are being developed for activities to engage businesses, residents and schools in climate change action.</p> <p>Networks continue to be developed across public and private sectors to ensure a comprehensive approach to climate change across the county. The Welsh Government Energy Service and Welsh Local Government Association lead both regional and pan-Wales networking groups for decarbonisation officers across the public sector. This is an essential resource for learning and showcasing best practice and provides opportunities for joint working projects where all organisations are working towards a shared outcome. Outputs from these groups are fed into the Local Government Climate Strategy Panel that is represented by Welsh Government. Wrexham & Flintshire Public Service Board (PSB) continues to provide a collaborative environment for all public sector organisations in achieving carbon and environmental ambitions, and the links these have with social prescribing and health and wellbeing.</p>
1.10	<p>External influences:</p> <p>The Audit Wales report 'Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030', published in July 2022, makes five calls for action from public bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen your leadership and demonstrate your collective responsibility through effective collaboration - Clarify your strategic direction and increase your pace of implementation - Get to grips with the finances needed - Know your skills gaps and increase your capacity - Improve data quality and monitoring to support your decision making. <p>As a Council we have strengthened our leadership through a committed Cabinet Member for Climate Change, a formalised Climate Change Committee, and cross-departmental Officer working groups to demonstrate collective responsibility through collaboration. We are working with our public sector partners to better understand the finances associated with decarbonisation, and to share best practice with improved data quality. The Council must continue to increase the pace of</p>

implementation of carbon reduction projects and increased capacity where skills gaps exist by providing the necessary investment.

In July 2022 Welsh Government also published their 'Decarbonising Social Care in Wales's report which highlights key actions needed by the public sector to better understand the carbon emissions from social care services and to ensure actions to decarbonise are included in strategic plans. The Council's Climate Change Strategy already encompasses many aspects associated with social care, however, this will be reviewed as part of the strategy review in 2024/25. Within this review content and detail will be compared to the 'Social Care route map' to ensure this service area is effectively represented. Future carbon emission submissions to Welsh Government will require a separate analysis of emissions from social care.

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

With the addition of Homeworking emissions in 2021/22, and social care in 2022/23, the moving of reporting goalposts has potential to adversely affect the progress made in reducing our carbon emissions. It should be decided if any changes in methodology are to be included in future internal reporting or if the original baseline figures should be maintained.

In December 2021, the Welsh Government committed to the development of regional energy strategies and Local Area Energy Plans in its approach to create a national energy plan by 2024. This exercise maps out future energy demand and supply for all parts of Wales to identify gaps and enable future planning.

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

Ambition North Wales are also leading on the development of the Local Area Energy Plans and work with each Council will commence in 2023. The Planning is being funded by Welsh Government and the resulting Local Area Energy Plan will inform both local and national investment and decisions on future requirements for energy across all sectors.

1.11	<p>Significant change will not happen within the organisation without adequate capacity. This can take the form not only in the human resource to lead and manage projects or the financial resource to invest when needed, but also the political will and understanding of realising the long term benefits of decisions made today.</p> <p>In times of austerity, it is important to justify how spending decisions are made. Prioritising one area of urgency over another is down to how seriously the Council considers its responsibilities in terms of the ambition to become net zero carbon. The Council has a record of committing to investment in green projects highlighted within the Council Plan and this must be continued to achieve the ambitious targets set out.</p> <p>We have invested in staff capacity to lead the delivery of the Climate Change strategy, however we now need to utilise specific knowledge and skills to develop and lead change in decarbonising our Fleet, Buildings and Procurement. These roles should be located within the teams leading on the key actions to reduce carbon emissions from these work areas.</p> <p>The Council was successful in securing a degree apprentice in 'Low Carbon Energy and Sustainability' through Welsh Government's initiative to invest in green skills. This placement is in partnership with Wrexham Glyndwr University and is already proving to be a valuable resource for the programme.</p>
1.10	<p>By working to achieve these goals Flintshire County Council can make its contribution to tackling the climate emergency and a net zero Wales by 2050 as detailed in Climate Change (Wales) Regulations 2021.</p> <p>Furthermore, achieving the Council's own well-being goals and those within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. As climate change and the environment are intrinsically linked the Council will also deliver on its statutory duties within Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to maintain and enhance biodiversity.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Capital and revenue resource will be required to continue improvement of energy efficiency in buildings assets. Where possible SALIX loans and external funding will support this programme. Costs still to be determined.
2.02	Capital resource will be required for improvement of electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support transition of fleet to EV. Installation cost approximately £600k supported by external funding.
2.03	Next stage large scale renewable energy generation estimated costs £1.1m. This could be funded through Prudential borrowing.
2.04	Dedicated staff resource is needed to progress the decarbonisation of both fleet and procurement. Opportunities exist to utilise a joint Procurement officer with Denbighshire County Council.
2.05	In order to educate and inform key decision makers on climate change actions it is essential that priority is given to completion of Carbon Literacy training. In-house provision of this is saving the Council approx £34,000 in

training revenue. The estimated costs for delivery to all Elected Members and Senior Managers is £2,000.
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3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT	
3.01	There will be significant reputational risk if the County Council is not seen to take a leadership role in moving towards net zero carbon. Financial risk will be assessed on a project-by-project basis but lack of availability of internal and external funding will reduce the action that can be taken.	
3.02	Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact	
	Long-term	Positive: Decarbonisation of the Council’s activities and services will require long term planning and a long term vision to ensure systems and services are fit for purpose as the climate changes as well as reducing the impact of harmful climate change through mitigation. Decarbonisation activities such as planting trees and developing renewable energy will have long lasting impacts over tens to hundreds of years. These activities also contribute to the climate change targets set by Welsh Government particularly Wales generating 70% of its electricity demand from renewable energy by 2030 and becoming a net zero carbon nation by 2050.
	Prevention	Positive: In order to avoid the harmful effects of climate change it is necessary for the Council to reduce its carbon emissions and increase the amount of carbon sequestered in its land assets. Carbon emissions caused by human activities are the main cause of climate change. Mitigating climate change will help to reduce impacts such as extreme weather causing flooding / extreme heat, loss of wildlife and habitats, increased pests and diseases, etc. Adapting to the impacts of climate change now will improve sustainability of our communities as the climate changes.
	Integration	Positive: Becoming net zero carbon integrates with the following priorities under the Council Plan; Green Council, Ambitious Council and Supportive Council. It integrates with the public service board objectives in the Environment priority of the Wellbeing Plan as well as the Smart Access to Energy project in the North

	Wales Growth Deal. It also integrates with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Welsh Government's decarbonisation of the public sector agenda.
Collaboration	Positive: The climate change programme offers multiple opportunities to work collaboratively both internally and externally – and this collaboration will determine the success of the programme. Collaboration with the following groups is needed to ensure decarbonisation is integrated into everything that the Council and the wider region does and plans for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welsh Government - Other public sector organisations such as local authorities, NRW, health boards, universities. - Private sector - Regional groups such as the North Wales Economic Ambition Board - Local Town and County Councillors - the local communities
Involvement	Positive: If decarbonisation is to succeed and harmful climate change is to be avoided then everyone at a professional and personal level will need to be involved

Well-being Goals Impact

Prosperous Wales	Positive: Reducing the Council's carbon emissions should enable strategic investment in projects and ways of working that could deliver savings or generate new income streams, therefore supporting delivery of local services. It should also facilitate the development of the low carbon economy through infrastructure projects, sustained tree planting, land management etc which can support local businesses and communities.
Resilient Wales	Positive: Decarbonisation of the Council's activities and services will promote resilience through actions such as: investment in renewable energy infrastructure which helps to reduce reliance on imports from across Europe and the World and the associated price fluctuations, and increasing ecological resilience through enhancing biodiversity particularly on land with low ecological

		value. By planning for climate change adaptation the Council's services and its communities will also be resilient.
	Healthier Wales	Positive: Decarbonisation requires a shift to active travel, investment in green infrastructure, support for local and sustainable food sources, and development of renewable energy which are likely to promote healthier lifestyles, improved wellbeing and reduced health impacts from poor air quality.
	More equal Wales	Neutral; No impact identified
	Cohesive Wales	Neutral; No impact identified
	Vibrant Wales	Neutral; No impact identified
	Globally responsible Wales	Positive: Reducing the Council's carbon emissions to net zero helps to mitigate climate change and therefore contributes to the achievement of Welsh Government, UK Government and international climate goals.
3.03	Not anticipated to be any negative anti-poverty, equalities or environmental impacts of the scheme.	
3.04	<p>The Council's Well-being Objectives</p> <p>Decarbonisation of the Council's activities will support the Green Council objective with a key impact of reducing carbon emissions mitigating climate change, for example, through the development of alternative and renewable energy production, promoting active travel, shifting to electric fleet vehicles, engaging with the supply chain and promoting a low carbon economy through the goods and services purchased.</p> <p>It can also contribute towards the success of other Council Wellbeing objectives such as 'An Ambitious Council' and 'A Caring Council' through providing local job creation and apprenticeships and therefore potentially reducing poverty through maximising residents' income and employability.</p>	

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 – FCC Carbon Emission update</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Climate Change Action Plan progress</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	1. Prosperity for all – a low carbon Wales https://gov.wales/prosperity-all-low-carbon-wales
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
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7.01	Contact Officer: Alex Ellis – Programme Manager Telephone: 01352 703110 E-mail: alex.ellis@flintshire.gov.uk
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8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS These are provided corporately on the Infonet (link) and maintained by the Executive Office
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	<p>Capital Funding: Capital funding is usually utilised to acquire or improve a long-term asset such as equipment or buildings.</p> <p>Carbon emissions: Used interchangeably with greenhouse gas emissions; meaning emissions of carbon dioxide, methane etc from human and natural activities and sources. Wider greenhouse gas emissions are collectively calculated into a ‘carbon dioxide equivalent’ displayed as CO₂e.</p> <p>Carbon sequestration: the process involved in carbon capture and the long term storage of atmospheric carbon dioxide.</p> <p>Decarbonisation: Reducing and ultimately eliminating carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>EV: Electric Vehicle</p> <p>Net Zero Carbon: Balancing carbon emissions with carbon removal or simply eliminating carbon emissions altogether.</p> <p>Revenue Funding: is utilised for items that will be used within a year. Examples include salaries, heating, lighting, services and small items of equipment. Routine repairs are revenue expenditures and can include significant repairs that do not extend the life of the asset or do not improve the asset.</p>
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Carbon Emission update 2021-22

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1 Executive Summary

Flintshire County Council's target is to become net zero carbon by 2030.

In order to gauge progress towards this target, carbon emissions are tracked and reported on an annual basis. By understanding what the sources of carbon emissions are, the Council can formulate strategic priorities to mitigate climate change.

The progress detailed within the report allows us to pinpoint areas where data collection methods need to be improved, focus investment and decision making on areas that are not performing as expected, and review projected forecasts to take us to our 2030 goal.

The methodology used to determine the Council's carbon footprint is based on Welsh Government guidance 'Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Reporting Guide Version 2, 2022'.

Some of the methodology used within this process has already changed year on year since the baseline calculation was made in 2018/19. Introduction of new measures into the calculation can confuse and undermine the progress that the Council is making in its carbon reduction activities. Due to this, this progress report follows the sources of carbon emission as detailed in our in-scope baseline footprint calculations.

The total carbon emissions for 2021/22 before removing carbon offset from our land was 46,493tCO₂e. This is a 1% increase on carbon emissions based on our 2018/19 baseline and is due to the increase in emissions from Procurement. The methodology adopted for emissions from procurement is based on value of spend, and therefore an increase in Council spend will reflect an increase in carbon emissions.

All other sources of carbon have seen reductions above the targeted 9% and 8% as detailed in the climate change strategy.

Focus must be given to adoption of a more effective and accurate methodology for determining the Council's emissions from supply chain.

2 Our Baseline

Everything we do has an effect on the environment we live in; from burning fossil fuels for heating to collecting kerbside waste and recycling. Flintshire County Council reports its carbon footprint to Welsh Government as tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) within its organisational and operational boundaries. This plan relates to the Council's internal operations which are:

- Buildings owned and operated by the Council including offices, depots, schools, community centres, care homes, public conveniences and street lighting. This includes heating, electricity and water use within these facilities.
- Fleet vehicles owned by the Council,
- Business travel for work,
- Employee commuting,
- Procurement of goods and services.

The scope excludes:

- Domestic properties,
- Buildings owned by us that are leased out and operated by third parties,

In order to establish where we are and where we need to be, we first need to look at our baseline figures. In 2018/19 we were able to capture the data set out below. Figure 1 below shows a breakdown of GHG emissions by emission source for 2018/19.¹

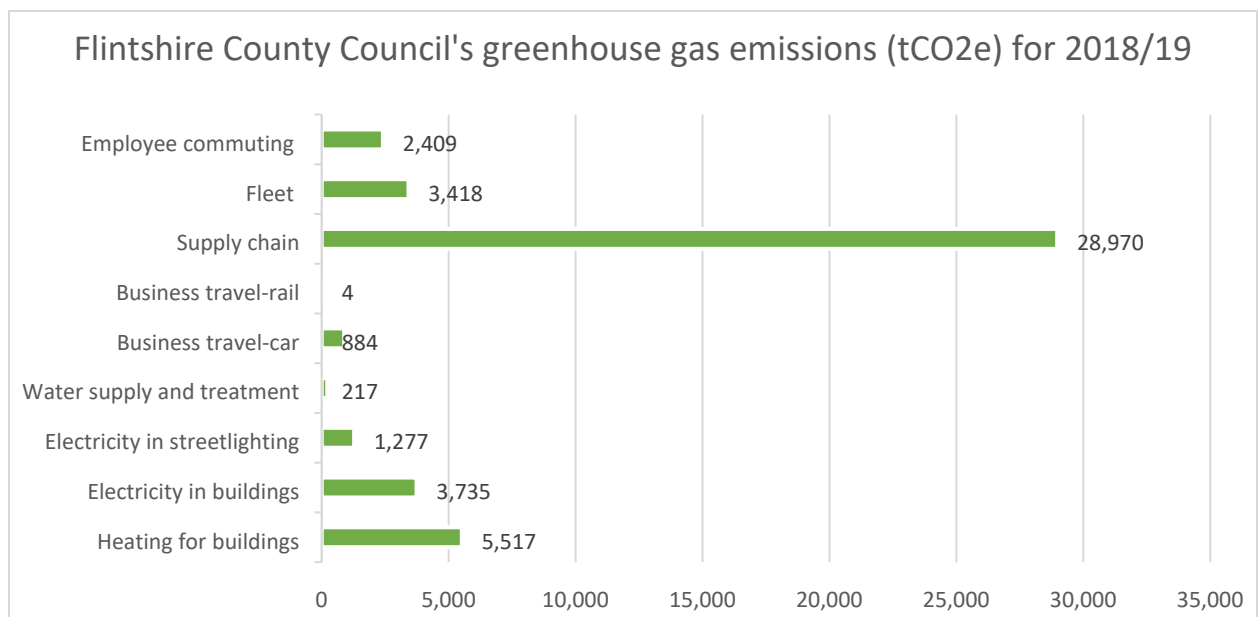


Figure 1: Flintshire County Council's GHG emissions for 2018/19 baseline

¹ It should be noted that the data has been collected using the best available methods at that time, and therefore the expectancy is that data accuracy will improve with emerging methodologies.

As these figures suggest, the biggest contributors to the Council's carbon footprint in 2018/19 were:

- Supply chain; procurement of goods and services: 62%
- Heating for buildings: 12%
- Electricity in buildings: 8%
- Fleet: 7%
- Employee commuting: 5%²

The Council produced 1,664 tonnes of waste in 2018-19 from its operations, however all waste collected by the Council, including operational waste, was either recycled or sent to energy from waste plants for incineration when it cannot be recycled. All green waste is composted. Therefore the only carbon emissions related to waste are included in the 'Fleet' data through waste collection vehicles.

Supply chain; procurement of goods and services equates to 62% of our baseline carbon emissions total. The Council understands that there are actions that can be taken to reduce these emissions through decision making processes and supplier engagement, however this figure will only see significant reductions if the appropriate investment, policy and infrastructure is provided and developed by the Government.

From this data we understand that our baseline carbon emissions for 2018/19 were 46,434 tCO₂e.

In 2018/19, the Council reported an estimated 1,500 tCO₂e absorbed from its land assets. However, this figure has been estimated based on two specific land types – grassland and woodland/forest – with a common value factor used to determine the absorption of carbon. As yet, no formal baseline figures have been calculated for our land assets to determine more accurate absorption figures and therefore this action is a priority in realizing the true benefits of our land to both carbon sequestration and wider habitat richness.

The 2018/19 carbon absorption total can be removed from our emissions total as a 'carbon offset'. Therefore to meet our net zero carbon goal, the total carbon emitted by the Council, minus the total carbon absorbed from Council owned and operated land, must equal zero by 2030. In 2018/19 the balance of carbon emissions was 44,934 tCO₂e.

² Note this data has a high level of inaccuracy due to the calculation methodology used

3 Carbon Emissions for 2021/22

The Council now has carbon emission data for four financial years as shown in Figure 2 below. The total carbon emissions for 2019/20 saw a 1% reduction on the 2018/19 baseline. The total carbon emissions for 2020/21 saw a 17% reduction on the 2018/19 baseline. The total carbon emissions for 2021/22 saw a 1% increase on the 2018/19 baseline.

Emissions reductions in 2021/22 were made across all sources except supply chain where there was a 12% increase on 2018/19 baseline. The methodology adopted for calculating our carbon emissions is mandated by Welsh Government. The methodology for calculating carbon emissions from supply chain is based on the value of spend. Therefore if the Council spends more money one year than a previous year then the consequential emissions will be higher. This is not an ideal or accurate method to calculate these emissions and work must be carried out to improve the recording of actual emissions related to contracts to improve this data accuracy.

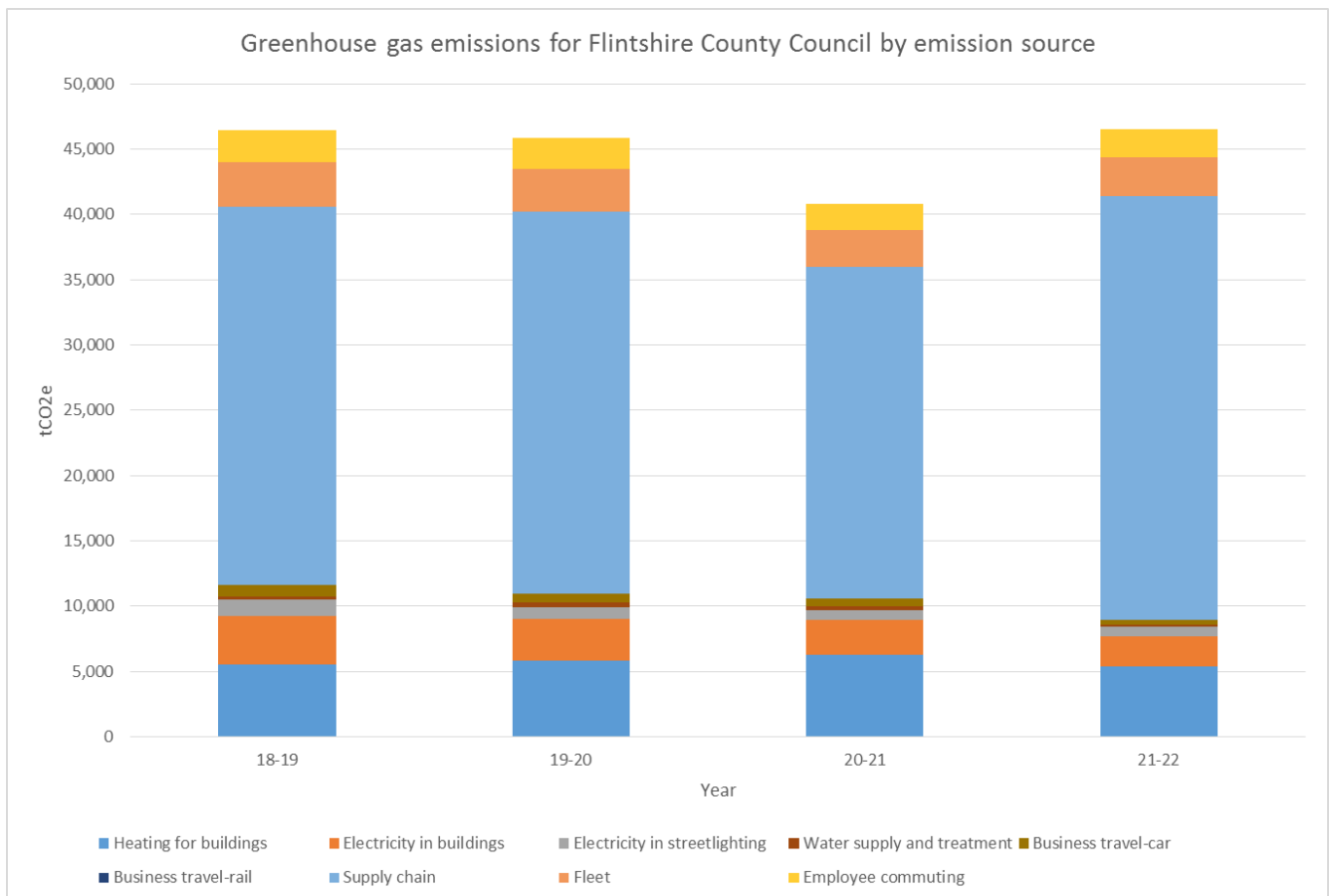


Figure 2: Flintshire County Council GHG emissions over past 4 financial years by emission source

Aside from supply chain, compared to 2018/19 baseline, we saw a 3% reduction in heating from buildings, 37% reduction in electricity in buildings, 44% reduction in electricity from street lighting, 51% reduction in business travel and 15% reduction from fleet. This is reflective of the projects carried out during this reporting year by further reducing emissions from buildings through renewal of heating sources, management of heating controls, other energy efficiency measures and building-mounted renewable energy generation. Emission reductions in business travel and fleet reflect the continuation of hybrid working across the county, and the use of intelligent route mapping for Streetscene and maintenance services.

The methodology used to determine emissions from business mileage and employee commuting continue to have a high level of deviation due to gaps in data records. Data recorded within mileage claims needs to be strengthened so that actual vehicle and fuel types can be captured. This will allow for more accurate calculation of emissions from business travel. An employee survey to determine methods of travel into the workplace and frequency of travel would allow more accurate estimates of related emissions, and the subsequent impact of home working.

The methodology to determine emissions from water use also have a high level of deviation. These figures are currently calculated using invoice cost values. Being able to capture actual water usage figures would improve the accuracy of emissions from water usage across our buildings.

Figure 3 below shows our actual emissions and the milestones we hope to reach between now and 2030. We are currently aiming for a 60% emission reduction in Buildings, 80% emission reduction in Mobility & Transport and 60% reduction in Procurement by 2030.

	Baseline tCO ₂ e	Actual Reduction	Targeted Reduction	
Theme	2018/19	2021/22	2024/25	2029/30
Buildings	10,747	13%	35%	60%
Mobility & Transport	6,716	16%	50%	80%
Procurement	28,970	24% increase	30%	60%

Figure 3: Flintshire County Council Carbon Emission Milestones to 2030

To achieve these milestones we set annual targets in each theme as detailed below in Figure 4. The target percentage reduction is compared to the 2018/19 baseline. We overachieved on our reduction targets in Buildings and Mobility & Transport, and underachieved in Procurement as detailed previously.

Theme	2018/19 Baseline tCO ₂ e	2021/22 target tCO ₂ e % reduction	2021/22 actual tCO ₂ e	2021/22 actual tCO ₂ e
Buildings	10,747	9%	8,543	13% reduction
Mobility & Transport	6,716	9%	5,504	16% reduction
Procurement	28,970	8%	32,446	24% increase

Figure 4: Flintshire County Council Carbon Emission Targets for 2021/22

4 Land Use emissions

Land use emissions are determined using the Welsh Government’s methodology, emission factors for each land type, and our internal knowledge of land types under our ownership and control. Depending on usage, land can have positive or negative net carbon emissions. Settlements and croplands are net emitters while forests and grassland absorb and store carbon. Wetlands and peatlands also have the potential to absorb and store carbon depending on their condition, however the Welsh Government methodology does not currently include emission factors for these land types.

The emission breakdown from our land types can be seen in Figure 5. We are working to better understand and map our land assets so that we can ensure this data is accurate. This exercise also helps us to identify areas of land that could be beneficial for carbon off setting, natural flood defence and biodiversity net gain.

Land Type	Land area ha	Emission factor	Total kg CO2e
Forest land	151.68	-5.420194632	-822135.1219
Grassland	479.91	-1.44069199	-691402.4928
Settlements	1.23	2.104948644	2589.086832
Wetlands	78.91	N/A	

Figure 5: Breakdown of Flintshire County Council Land Types and Carbon impact 2021/22

Figure 6 shows the 2021/22 emissions and removals of kgCO2e based on the above methodology. By increasing the quantity of forest land and grassland we can increase the amount of carbon that we absorb and store. The pan-Wales decarbonisation network are working with Welsh Government to improve the data and emission factors associated with different land types to better reflect the assets that we have within Flintshire land.

Land based emissions Categories	Units of kgCO ₂ e	
	Emissions	Removals
Total land based emissions	2,589	- 1,513,538

Figure 6: Summary of Flintshire County Council land based emissions/removals 2021/22

5 Renewable Energy generation

The Council continues to invest in renewable energy generation both within its building assets and large scale solar farms. Investing in renewable energy that is consumed onsite allows a reduction in energy used from the grid. This saving is demonstrated in the emissions from electricity use. Investing in renewable energy that is exported into the grid assists in the local and national decarbonisation of energy provision moving us away from reliance on energy generated by burning of fossil fuels. Figure 7 below shows the energy generated and exported from each of our current renewable energy source types.

<i>Renewables</i>	Units of kWh	
	Total generated	Total exported
Onsite renewables – Solar PV mounted	636,395	159,099
Onsite renewables – Wind mounted	10,922	2,731
Onsite renewables – Biogas CHP (Landfill gas turbines)	1,614,723	1,614,723
Onsite renewables – Solar PV ground mounted	721,081	721,081
Renewables	2,983,121	2,497,634

Figure 7: Flintshire County Council Renewable Energy Generation 2021/22

6 Next steps and recommendations

It is the role of the Climate Change Committee to oversee and review the progress made against the Council's ambition to become net zero carbon by 2030. The Committee will continue to develop the Climate Change strategy and action plan and oversee implementation of its delivery.

There are areas of the collection and interpretation of carbon emission data that need to be strengthened over the coming year in order to achieve more meaningful data on the Council's carbon emissions. These areas include business mileage, employee commuting, home working, water use and procurement as detailed within this report.

Officer working groups for each of the key themes continue to work through the action plan, troubleshooting, identifying resource needs and developing business cases where necessary.

Appendix 1 - Glossary

Biodiversity: The variety of plant and animal life that make up our natural world or a particular habitat.

Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO₂e): the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide that would produce the same amount of global warming over a 100 year timescale.

Carbon Store: the amount of carbon stored in the natural environment such as soil, woodland, peatland etc. These may also be described as carbon sinks.

Council assets: buildings and land owned by Flintshire County Council.

Decarbonisation: reducing the carbon intensity and greenhouse gas emissions of an activity or service or wider organization.

Net Zero Carbon: Emissions of greenhouse gases are balanced by the removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere such as by trees, peatland and carbon capture and storage technologies.

Offsetting: A reduction in GHG emissions (e.g. wind turbines replacing coal) or an increase in carbon storage/GHG removal enhancement (tree planting, peatland restoration) outside of the GHG emissions boundary of an organisation that is used to compensate GHG emissions occurring within the organisation's boundary

Sequestration: Removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and then storing it, usually through environmental processes such as photosynthesis, absorption by soil, oceans etc.

Climate Change Programme Action Plan

Ref.	Theme	Action	Target start date	Progress 2021-22
CCBu1	Buildings	All Council buildings and schools electricity delivered through a green energy tariff by 2025	2022	Large percentage of buildings are now included in the green energy tariff. Remaining buildings are being added as and when existing energy contracts end.
CCBu2		Review and rationalise building assets and leases considering new ways of working	2022	The council's Asset Management Plan has been reviewed in line with the climate change strategy and wider Council ambitions. Rationalisation of assets is ongoing.
CCBu3		Improve the standard of energy efficiency within Council buildings through retrofit measures such as; insulation, glazing, installation of efficient / renewable heating systems, and reducing building electricity use.	2022	Energy efficiency works continue to be completed across the Council's assets. A full scoping exercise is needed to determine what remaining improvements can be made and this will inform a completion rate and investment need.
CCBu4		Further explore renewable energy opportunities for Council buildings, council office car parks and depots	2022-23	Work is ongoing with Welsh Government Energy Service to determine feasibility of sites for further renewable energy generation.
CCBu5		Design and refurbish buildings for carbon neutral / low energy operation, biodiversity net benefit and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.	2022	Mandatory requirement for new, extended and refurbished schools to be Net Zero Carbon in operation (NZCio). The first NZCio school is in plan. Ambitious plans also underway for first NZCio care home. New builds are estimated to have 20% cost increase to meet NZC standard.
CCBu6		Ensure green infrastructure is considered throughout all existing Council assets and future schemes	2022	Ongoing process identifying feasibility of potential green infrastructure projects on a case by case basis. Links have been made to ensure officers are consulted on potential of inclusion in future schemes.
CCBu7		Continue to carry out flood investigation and alleviation to identify proactive mitigation measures & prevent recurrent flooding	Ongoing	The Council's Flood Risk Management Strategy is being reviewed and will encompass areas of recurrent flooding.
CCBu8		Prioritise nature based solutions to flooding remediation proposals	Ongoing	This will also be encompassed in the Flood Risk Management Strategy review.

CCBu9	Page 44	Explore feasibility for rainwater harvesting within Council assets, particularly on high water usage sites.	2023	<i>No update</i>
CCBu10		Support schools and Town & Community Councils to reduce operation's emissions and engage with our building users to encourage positive behaviour change	2022	Toolkits are being developed for schools and Town & Community Councils to provide advice and guidance on carbon footprint calculation and mitigation measures. This will include aspects of technology, behaviour and best practice.
CCBu11		Develop plan for the decarbonisation of Council homes in line with Welsh Government guidance to ensure optimised thermal efficiency and minimised cost of heating	2022	Decarbonisation strategy in development. Bid secured through Optimised Retrofit Programme for pilot housing scheme which will inform future schemes. Estimate £80k cost per house to meet NZC.
CCBu12		Continue to deliver programmes with private households and local businesses to reduce fuel poverty and provide access to wider energy efficiency and renewable energy schemes.	Ongoing	The Domestic Energy Efficiency Team continues to provide energy efficiency advice and support with installation of energy efficiency measures. Decarbonisation network developed for Deeside industrial area to develop aims and objectives and share good practice. Funding secured through Shared Prosperity Fund to provide grants for commercial carbon reduction feasibility studies.
CCBu13		Provide support through Flood Risk Planning to businesses and households to better implement property flood resilience	2024	Updated TAN 15 will be available June 2023 with guidance from NRW.

Ref.	Theme	Action	Target start date	Progress 2021/22
CCM1	Mobility & Transport	Review fleet policy with consideration for charging of vehicles.	2022	Policy under review to incorporate decarbonisation of fleet.
CCM2		Learning from accelerated change due to COVID-19, review and implement policies and initiatives that support the reduction of carbon emissions from business mileage. Continue to implement and develop agile working practices to reduce employee journeys and utilise virtual meetings. Act as an example to businesses.	2022-23	Hybrid Working Policy has been published encouraging flexible working approach and utilisation of virtual meetings.

CCM3	Ensure vehicle charging points are available at key areas across the county - rural and urban.	2022	17 electric vehicle charging points have been installed across 8 public car park sites across the county.
CCM4	Introduce electric vehicles into the recycling fleet	2022	2 x trial vehicles have been awarded by Welsh Government. These will be implemented into rounds once received and charging infrastructure has been established.
CCM5	Transition of small fleet vehicles to electric and alternative fuels (hydrogen, etc)	2023-24	<i>No update</i>
CCM6	Transition of heavy vehicles to electric or alternative fuels (hydrogen, etc)	2027	<i>No update</i>
CCM7	Facilitate a car sharing forum for employees – once measures post COVID-19 are reviewed.	Post-Covid	<i>No update</i>
CCM8	Actively promote the existing employee cycle to work scheme to increase participation and review cycle storage facilities at principle work places (i.e. County Hall, Mold, County Offices, Flint, Ty Dewi Sant and Alltami Depot)	2022	Review needed of resources required to improve uptake eg. Storage facilities, showering facilities, electric bike charging infrastructure, and sufficient safe cycle routes to work places.
CCM9	Promote and launch a managed salary sacrifice scheme for low and ultra-low emission vehicles.	2022	Launch of scheme delayed due to resource being allocated to other priorities.
CCM10	Promote use of public transport, active travel, and further develop the Council's walking and cycling network	2022	Active Travel Network has gone through consultation and moving to next stage improvements.
CCM11	Promote multi-modal transport journeys and the development of strategic transport hubs. Improve access to storage, charging and hiring facilities.	2022	Review of current transport hubs needed to determine if they are fit for purpose and any additional facilities needed to support active travel connections.
CCM12	Investigate further opportunities for reducing car use with consideration for local contexts and accessibility through ultra-low emission areas, car free zones and pedestrianised streets.	2023	Place plans will be developed during 2023-24 for town centres. The associated consultation processes will include car use needs within each town centre.
CCM13	Work with partners to enable greener fleet in the public transport sector (buses, rail, taxis) including Council contracted services such as school transport	2023	2 x electric buses are being introduced into the public service on a trial basis. This will allow for monitoring and review ready for wider roll out in future.

Ref.	Theme	Action	Target start date	Progress 2021/22
CCP1	Procurement	Review of procurement strategy in line with the Council's carbon ambitions to ensure specific measures around carbon and biodiversity are embedded in procurement process.	2022	Procurement Strategy currently being reviewed to reflect carbon ambitions and need for this to be embedded within procurement processes.
CCP2		Increase the utilisation of the TOMs (Themes, Outcomes and Measures) framework in procurement across the Council's operations by working with employees who manage procurement activities	2022-23	TOMs framework has recently been updated with additional carbon outcomes included. Key tenders need to be identified to target for carbon outcomes.
CCP3		Work collaboratively with Denbighshire County Council to develop a toolkit to ensure all procurement exercises are awarded giving appropriate consideration to carbon reduction priorities and monitor contract against declared emissions. Provide communication and training to all affected employees suppliers and prospective bidders.	2022-23	Working with Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to develop a toolkit for implementing carbon measure scoring within tender processes. Expected launch of toolkit early 2023. WLGA will also provide support to officers and suppliers in utilising the toolkit. Dedicated resource is required for embedding this into the Council's procurement process. Potential for joint resource with Denbighshire County Council as Joint Procurement authority.
CCP5		Enable carbon offsetting best practice schemes providing local place-based environmental outcomes, where required	2022-23	Research continues into best practice for carbon offsetting within procurement.
CCP6		Ensure carbon reduction is appropriately considered throughout Council procurement policy, strategy, business cases, commissioning templates, tender evaluations, etc.	2022-23	Commissioning form to be reviewed to include carbon reduction and Exceptions report to be modified to include carbon.

CCP7		Increase local participation and stakeholder involvement by working with local businesses to ensure decarbonisation and social value outcomes are achieved	2022-23	<i>No update</i>
CCP8		Work in collaboration where procurement of goods and services can be utilised on a regional or joint basis	2022-23	<i>No update</i>

Ref.	Theme	Action	Target start date	Progress 2021/22
CCL1	Land Use	Identify current carbon storage capacity within Council assets through mapping habitat types	2022-23	Mapping exercise is ongoing. Revenue is needed to commission this work.
CCL2		Investigate the potential of our land assets for new renewable energy installations and operating models and develop these schemes to increase the amount of energy generated from these sources	2022	Work is ongoing with Welsh Government Energy Service to determine feasibility of sites for further renewable energy generation.
CCL3		Undertake a study identifying land for habitat restoration and tree planting schemes within land assets to mitigate climate change and enhance biodiversity	2022-23	Land mapping exercise is ongoing. Sites have been identified for potential tree planting however further feasibility of these sites is needed.
CCL4		Audit the amount of herbicide and pesticide use on Council land assets	2023	Use of herbicide and pesticide is being recorded and where possible use is rationalised and alternatives adopted.
CCL5		Increase proportion of Council land managed for biodiversity	Ongoing	Network of 109 nature areas across county covering 11.8hectares – grassland estate with reduced mowing regime managed for wildflower diversity.
CCL6		Support the increase of tree canopy cover across the county in line with the Urban Tree and Woodland Plan.	Ongoing	Canopy cover at risk due to storm damage and ash dieback. Ash dieback action plan in place and opportunities being developed for further tree planting.
CCL7		Assess impacts of Ash Dieback and tree planting within Flintshire assets on canopy cover and net carbon sequestration	Ongoing	As above.
CCL8		Increase area with reduced mowing regimes to enhance biodiversity and increase carbon storage	Ongoing	<i>No update</i>

CCL9		Strengthen the monitoring of sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) installation and quality in new developments.	Ongoing	<i>No update</i>
CCL10		Explore best practice policies and encourage provision of space for food growing in new developments and vacant and under used sites	2023	Sites receiving improvements such as water harvesting measures. New sites identified for food growing and are going through feasibility. Currently 16 food growing sites across the county covering 3.8hectares.
CCL11		Review and improve recycling provision in Council offices, schools and public buildings and remove use of single-use plastics. Communicate and engage building users to utilise provision	2022-23	Review of recycling provision in Council buildings taking place. Trials of on-demand collections at schools are ongoing.
CCL12		Support circular economy initiatives diverting reusable items from disposal through recovery at Household Recycling Centres	Ongoing	Deconstruction and set aside available at household recycling centres for large household items to be repaired and reused or broken down into component parts for recycling. Working with Flintshire Refurbs and local charities.
CCL13		Create guidelines for Council procurement of food in offices, schools, etc, to be local and sustainable	2025	<i>No update</i>
CCL14		Undertake a land use strategy to ensure land is managed and protected for green infrastructure, decarbonisation and biodiversity benefit.	2023	<i>No update</i>
CCL15		Work with Tenant farmers to share best practice on sustainable farming, increasing carbon absorption and biodiversity value.	2023	<i>No update</i>
CCL16		Work with communities to increase biodiversity value and carbon storage.	Ongoing	<i>No update</i>
CCL17		Identify opportunities to acquire new Council land for the purpose of carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancement.	2023-24	<i>No update</i>

Ref.	Theme	Action	Target start date	Progress 2021/22
CCBe1	Behaviour	Ensure climate change and biodiversity is considered a priority in decision making across all Council services	2022-23	Integrated Impact Assessment, Capital business case template, Asset Management Plan, Procurement Strategy and Due diligence form within Social Services have been reviewed to reflect carbon ambitions. Ongoing exercise to identify and review further key decision making policies.
CCBe2		Ensure Councillors and employees complete carbon literacy / introduction to climate change / Naturewise training. Inclusion of climate change within induction process.	2022-23	20 x Council employees have completed Carbon Literacy training. This should be a mandatory requirement for Elected Members and Senior Managers. Minimal financial cost of £10 per person can be absorbed through existing training budgets. E-learn module for climate change and biodiversity under development as part of a regional commission.
CCBe3		Engage employees and Trade Unions to renew job descriptions to include climate change and biodiversity responsibilities where applicable, e.g. managers, budget holders, planning.	2023-24	<i>No update</i>
CCBe4		Facilitate transition towards a 'paperless Council' through, for example, digitisation of wage slips, report packs, contracts, applications.	2022	Enrolment of new Elected Members included iPad and laptop to remove need for paper-based report packs post-May 2022. Default is that paper copies of reports are not sent out. Behavioural change communicating policy on printing needs to be adopted by Officers and Members.
CCBe5		Facilitate corporate volunteering for climate and biodiversity action	2023-24	<i>No update</i>
CCBe6		Investigate the possibility of divesting pensions and other investment portfolios away from fossil fuels in support of green energy.	2022	Clwyd Pension Fund have a climate change strategy in place to achieve net zero carbon by 2045. Divesting decisions are made by Committee. Investment of £50 mill agreed on clean energy projects in Wales. Sustainable active equity mandate being implemented.

CCBe7		Facilitate community events and activities to raise awareness of climate change and how to reduce carbon footprints.	2023	4 x events taken place as part of Wales Climate Week – energy saving and carbon footprint drop in sessions across the county. 'Calculating your carbon footprint' page launched on FCC website and climate change e-newsletter launched to over 900 subscribers.
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ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	7 th February 2023
Report Subject	Woodland Strategy Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Report Author	Chief Officer for Planning, Environment and Economy
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report updates Members on the delivery of the Flintshire Urban Tree and Woodland Plan adopted by the Council in 2018 and seeks Members' views on developing a Flintshire Forest.

The overarching vision of the Urban Tree & Woodland Plan (2018) was to increase urban canopy cover to 18% by 2032. This report details the amount of progress in tree planting which has occurred in the last four years. Additionally, a Flintshire Forest has been proposed and Members are asked for their views on the scope for its delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members note the content of this update and support the officers in their ongoing tree and woodland management work.
2	That Members support plans to develop the Flintshire Forest in accordance with the framework details provided.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE WOODLAND STRATEGY UPDATE
1.01	The benefits that trees provide to people and the environment are diverse and many-fold. As well as moderating air temperatures, reducing flooding,

	<p>locking up carbon dioxide and improving air quality, trees have a positive effect on our mental and physical health.</p> <p>The Urban Tree and Woodland Strategy (2018) (FUTWP) examines the opportunities for tree planting, how this will be done and provides a best practice approach to the management of existing urban trees and woodland, including community and partnership working in its delivery.</p> <p>The Plan also sets out the Council’s approach to the sustainable management of trees on its own land and how its local planning authority powers can be used to sustain and increase canopy.</p>
1.02	<p>The Strategy’s vision:</p> <p><i>‘To have a diverse and resilient tree canopy cover throughout Flintshire’s towns that is appreciated, managed sustainably, provides multiple benefits to people and the environment, and enhances biodiversity.’</i></p> <p>To support this overarching vision the Strategy sets out the following target:</p> <p><i>To increase urban canopy cover from 14.5% to 18% by 2033</i></p>
1.03	<p>The plan uses the findings of research into urban trees carried out by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). This research provided the Council with invaluable baseline information about the nature and distribution of urban tree cover across various land uses and critically where tree cover is low and could be increased. Flintshire’s canopy cover was 14.5%, the seventh lowest in Wales. NRW have not undertaken a subsequent survey and there for the current percentage of canopy cover is unknown.</p>
1.04	<p>New tree planting is the most direct way of increasing canopy cover to meet the canopy cover target set out in the FUTWP and can range from new woodland planting largely comprising of small ‘whip’ trees to the planting of a single ‘standard’ sized tree on area of open ground, such as a highway verge.</p> <p>Well planned and implemented schemes of tree planting are easier to maintain and less likely to fail. Tree species will be suitable for the soil type, drainage and position. In particular varieties of tree with tightly formed crowns will be used where there is limited space (e.g. pavements) and large spreading species (e.g. common beech) used in parks where they can grow unconstrained and afford the greatest benefits.</p> <p>Tree planting schemes will also take into account the likelihood of casual vandalism, specifying larger and more robust trees and/or tree guards where necessary.</p> <p>One aspect of delivery that has been challenging is negativism by some members of the public failing to recognise the benefits trees and woodlands provide to themselves and their environment. This has meant that community consultations for each project have taken longer to and in some cases tree planting has been amended or not undertaken at all.</p>

1.05	<p>Tree planting schemes across the county have been implemented with the following numbers of trees planted per year:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="316 235 1332 600"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>No Standards</th> <th>No Whips</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2018</td> <td>No Data</td> <td>200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>129</td> <td>6400</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>193</td> <td>2632</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021</td> <td>391</td> <td>7750</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022</td> <td>69</td> <td>5470</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTALS</td> <td>782</td> <td>22452</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		No Standards	No Whips	2018	No Data	200	2019	129	6400	2020	193	2632	2021	391	7750	2022	69	5470	TOTALS	782	22452
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TOTALS	782	22452																				
1.06	<p>As part of the work to engage people in tree planting and to extoll the benefits that trees provide, a 'storymap' web page is in development which highlights 15 recent tree planting schemes across the county. Link: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7eab40e4633346afb360cec8e04efc2a</p>																					
1.07	<p>The Flintshire Labour Manifesto 2022, 'securing Flintshire's Future' promises to create a Flintshire Forest. The development of a Flintshire Forest is included on the Council Plan 2022-2023</p>																					
1.08	<p>The words 'forest' and 'woodland' are frequently used interchangeably. The term forest can be used to describe an enclosed area of trees, but also can include a broader area of unenclosed land which has a significant tree coverage, for example an 'urban forest' or ancient royal hunting forest.</p>																					
1.09	<p>It is assumed that the Flintshire Forest would form part of Wales' National Forest first unveiled by the First Minister in 2020 promoted on the Welsh Government's web pages. According to the Welsh Government website the National Forest for Wales would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create areas of new woodland • help to restore and maintain some of our irreplaceable ancient woodlands <p>In time it will form a connected network of woodlands throughout Wales. This will bring social, economic and environmental benefits.</p> <p>New managed woodlands created for the National Forest will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide spaces for leisure and nature • help to capture and store carbon • provide timber - a sustainable resource for construction <p>The Welsh Government have provided £5 million of additional funding to support the National Forest initiative. In 2021 the Council successfully applied for grant funding under the National Forest for Wales initiative and planted a new woodland extension at Wepre Park</p>																					

1.10	<p>Taking into account the adopted FUTWP, the concept of the National Forest for Wales it is necessary to consider what the vision is for the Flintshire Forest, its objective and how it will be achieved.</p> <p>To a significant degree the three initiatives will overlap, clearly the initiative will contribute significantly to our tree planting target in the FUTWP and contribute towards our Climate Change Carbon Reduction Strategy, however larger areas of new woodland may lie outside of the urban area and there may be limited availability of public land to deliver this initiative and consideration needs to be given to working in partnership with private landowners and the general public.</p>
1.11	<p>To take the concept forward Members are asked to consider the following framework for a Flintshire Forest:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Located within the County of Flintshire</u> Notwithstanding, the initiative could link with woodlands and forests in adjacent counties as promoted by the National Forest for Wales • <u>Not a single forest or woodland</u> Instead, comprising of a network of urban and rural woodlands across the County in accordance with National Forest for Wales vision. • <u>Including trees and small groups of trees in settlements</u> In accordance with the urban forest and canopy cover definitions. • <u>Comprising of Council, other public and private land</u> Whilst it is necessary to explore all the opportunities on Council land, private landowners and other organisations may wish to participate in the initiative • <u>Focused on delivering the greatest public benefits</u> These benefits will be greatest where a tree or woodland planting is within or adjacent to main settlements. • <u>Promoting biodiversity</u> The Council has a duty to safeguard and where possible enhance biodiversity • <u>Contributing to mitigating climate change impacts</u> In summer trees provide shade reducing high temperatures, they intercept rain reducing flooding and provide shelter from cold winds in winter. Trees also have lesser role in sequestration carbon. • <u>Engages with communities</u> • <u>Includes working in partnership with other organisations</u>
1.12	<p>It is expected that a Flintshire Forest initiative would significantly contribute to the momentum required to increase the level of tree planting in the County to meet the existing commitment achieving an increase in urban canopy cover.</p> <p>In rural areas NRW and the Woodland Trust offer grants to landowners wanting to carry out woodland planting on their own land and it is not</p>

	<p>considered to be the Council’s role, or affordable, to duplicate the grants on offer.</p> <p>At this time, to deliver the aspirations of a Flintshire Forest, similar to the National Forest for Wales, land will need to be made available and secured for woodland planting. Most realistically this will be on land already owned by the Council that is available and suitable for that purpose.</p> <p>Currently, Officers are interrogating Flintshire’s database of landholdings to scope a number of potential sites which have good connectivity to other woodland areas and communities.</p> <p>Once suitable land is identified that could meet the criteria for a Flintshire Forest site there will need to be a focus on delivery, maintenance and ongoing management.</p>
1.13	<p>The development of a Flintshire Forest as outlined in the framework would be an initiative that meets many of the objectives of the Council and would benefit communities where located adjacent to urban areas.</p> <p>It should be recognised that there will be areas of overlap with existing activities and woodland planting in rural areas might occur regardless of a Flintshire Forest initiative.</p> <p>At this time it is considered that the main benefits of having a Flintshire Forest would be to create a shared vision for tree planting in Flintshire building on the urban tree and woodland plan to provide an overarching framework for tree planting in the county it would support community engagement and outline a sustainable funding model for tree planting and the required resources into the future and support local economies by creating a greener setting for local residents and businesses</p>
2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The resources to deliver tree planting schemes in Flintshire to support the Urban Tree and Woodland Plan or Flintshire Forest are currently being provided for through external grant and delivered by staff within the Access & Natural Environment Service. However this staff resource is at capacity which will limit the scope of additional tree planting schemes.</p>
2.02	<p>Additional woodland areas and trees require additional maintenance requirements which have yet to be identified.</p>
3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>Communities and residents adjacent to each new tree planting scheme are consulted.</p>
4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT

4.01	Available land shortage and the lack of additional revenue funding are risks for delivering a Flintshire forest or meeting our canopy cover target.
4.02	<p>The disease Ash dieback (reported to Environment Overview and Scrutiny committee in November 2022), presents a challenge in meeting our tree planting target with hundreds of tree being felled.</p> <p>Depending on resources there should be a recovery phase where efforts are made to replace felled trees in the rural landscape.</p> <p>Currently ash dieback is considered to be a major factor reducing urban canopy cover, although it is probably too early to say whether it will have a long term effect on urban canopy cover and whether the 18% target will be achieved. The long term effect will also dependent upon the amount of replacement planting and degree of success.</p>
5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None
6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Contact Officer: Tom Woodall, Access & Natural Environment Manager Telephone: 01352 703902 E-mail: tom.woodall@flintshire.gov.uk</p>
7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>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.</p> <p>Forest or Woodland An area of land densely covered with trees and frequently used to mean the same.</p> <p>Slight differences might be inferred with the word ‘forest’ reflecting land covered with commercially planted trees of the same species (more likely to be evergreen) and age.</p> <p>Whilst a ‘woodland’ is more likely to have existed largely unchanged for many years and contain trees of different species (more likely native) and ages, and is less likely to be managed commercially.</p> <p>Standard Tree Refers to a range of size between 2m and 4.5m tall with a clean stem universally used by the tree nurseries.</p> <p>Urban Canopy Cover</p>

The amount and distribution of urban land under tree or woodland cover when assessed using aerial photographs denoting the geographical extent of the urban forest apart from the youngest trees.

Urban Forest

A modern term used to collectively refer to all the trees and woodlands in urban and peri-urban areas, recognising that the combined benefits of the urban forest is much greater than the sum of its parts. Urban forestry advocates the strategic management of trees and woodland because it is a valuable resource.

Whip

Refers to a young tree 40-120cm tall

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Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting	7 th February 2023
Report Subject	Wepre Park Management Plan
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Report Author	Chief Officer for Planning, Environment and Economy
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wepre Park is one of Flintshire's finest parks and contains some of the most beautiful, culturally rich park land in the region, important to thousands of visitors each year. This management plan sets the strategic direction and associated action plan for the next 5 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members endorse the new 5 year management plan for Wepre Park.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE WEPRE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN
1.01	The purpose of this Management Plan is to present a management framework and associated actions for the successful collaborative management and development of Wepre Park.
1.02	This revised Management Plan for Wepre Park supersedes the 2016-21 plan and sets the strategic direction for the park in line with current policy and legislation. The new format places the site information and annual maintenance work programmes into appendices.

1.02	The work at Wepre Park is supported by and contributes to a number of National and local plans, policies and strategies which highlight the importance of green space, green infrastructure and recreational areas and seek to both protect and enhance them.
1.03	<p>Community Involvement</p> <p>The Friends of Wepre Park are an active community group who have been in existence for approx. 10 years. The group are keen to take an active interest in many aspects of the parks management and development. From practical tasks around the park to fundraising the group are a valuable resource</p>
1.04	The site currently provides community groups and individuals an opportunity for volunteering. This is an invaluable resource and has a significant contribution to the sites management and maintenance. Currently contributing to an additional c.240 days per year, equating to £12,000 of benefit
1.05	<p>Consultation</p> <p>Over the summer of 2021 a public consultation was undertaken to inform the development of the Wepre Park management plan. It showed the importance of the park to local people with over 85% of those responding living within a 5 mile radius. It also clearly demonstrated the contribution the park makes to the health and well-being of the local community through regular outdoor activity with over 50% of people using the park at least once a week.</p> <p>The survey found that a high proportion of people ranked the current management of the Park as a multifunctional facility which is safe, clean and able to be enjoyed by everyone, with the special wildlife qualities protected, enhanced and maintained and its heritage is protected, conserved and celebrated as excellent or good</p>
1.06	<p>Vision for the management plan</p> <p>The Wepre Park management plan will present a park that is welcoming, valued and enjoyed whilst protecting its heritage and allowing the wildlife of the site to flourish, whilst contributing towards the county's climate change strategy.</p> <p>The plan will promote activity which enhances peoples understanding of Wepre Park and create a resource which is valued by the local community and attracts people from the communities living and working around the park making a positive contribution to their physical and mental health and wellbeing as well as attracting visitors from across the region</p>
1.07	<p>Strategic Aims and Objectives</p> <p>Protect our natural environment</p> <p>We aim to ensure the special wildlife qualities are protected, enhanced and maintained and that we balance the needs of the environment with that of the public</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards SAC/SSSI favourable status through the Sect.16 Management agreement and deliver woodland management plan in partnership with Natural Resources Wales. • Support Flintshire's Climate change and carbon reduction strategy by becoming net carbon zero by 2030 • Contribute to Flintshire's target to achieve biodiversity net gain. 			
1.08	Aim	Action	Lead	Target completion
	Protect our Natural Environment	Phase 2 extension tree planting	TL	Mar 2024
		Renew the Management Agreement with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to deliver positive improvements to the Special Site of Scientific Interest.	ANEM	April 2023
		Develop and agree new woodland plan with NRW whilst tackling ash dieback	WO	June 2023
		Complete pilot Hydro-Electric project at the dam, test and evaluate	Energy Team	Feb 2023
		Establish maintenance regime for phase 1 extension area and old golf course	CR	June 2023
		Wepre Brook bank stabilisation	CR	Sept 2023
1.09	<p>Value our heritage We aim to protect, conserve and celebrate the rich heritage of Wepre Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with Cadw to safeguard Ewloe Castle • Maintain Old Hall Garden improvements • Raise awareness of the unique historic features of the site 			
1.10	Aim	Action	Lead	Target completion
	Value our heritage	Work in partnership with Cadw to maintain and protect Ewloe Castle	TL	Ongoing
		Repair Old Hall Garden wall and path repairs	CR	June 2025

		Re-instate the grills for the arches	CR	July 2023
		Establish a working fountain.	CR	2023
		Work with the Friends of Wepre Park to establish a Garden Maintenance Fund.	TL/CR	2024
1.11	<p>Supporting recreation and access We aim to be a multifunctional facility which is safe, clean and able to be enjoyed by everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Green Flag status • Ensure access is free from obstructions and work towards improving standards across the site • Supporting access for all 			
1.12	Aim	Action	Lead	Target completion
	Supporting recreation and access	Secure Greenflag award	CR	Annual
		Path improvement project/main trail and new golf course path	CR	2026
		Step replacement project – waterfall and castle steps	CR	2024
		parkrun waymarking	SL	2023
		Modernise the orienteering course and maps	CR	2024
		Review the provision of benches in the park to identify gaps.	CR	2025
1.13	<p>Benefit for people Using Wepre Park’s natural assets we aim to provide quality leisure, health and well-being and educational experiences for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise public awareness of the important natural and cultural heritage of the site through a rich variety of events, education, and interpretation • Maximise community involvement through working with the Friends and other volunteers and community groups • Contribute to the green health initiative by providing a facility of choice for people to use to improve their mental and physical health and wellbeing 			

1.14	Aim	Action	Lead	Target completion
	Benefit for people	Agree fishing lease	V&E/CQ Anglers	Mar 2023
		Volunteer development project	TL	Sept 2023
		Develop a programme of large events through external providers	CAO	Jul 2023
		Changing Places toilet facilities	TL	Mar 2023
		Signage review and consolidation	CAO	Apr 2023
		Establish a formal waymarked trail network and tree booklet	CR/Tree Team	Mar 2023
		Investigate resources for park app development, to incorporate route maps of varying difficulties.	CAO	2023
		Install visitor counter across the park	TL	Apr 2024
		Review education provision in light of the new curriculum	CAO	Sept 2023
		Explore a programme of Nordic walking with Aura	TL	2025
		Stakeholder terms of reference	TL	Apr 2023
		Liaise with the Police, CCTV and other partners to manage anti-social behaviour in the Park	CR	Dec 2023
1.15	<p>Resource confidence</p> <p>We aim to provide a stable financial footing to achieve the vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise income over and above Flintshire core budget • Maintain appropriate staffing level to deliver the plan 			

1.16	Aim	Action	Lead	Target completion
	Resource confidence	Explore street food vendors	CAO	Mar 2023
		Pilot motorhomes overnight	TL	Mar 2023
		Explore the potential for the introduction of car parking charges	ANEM/SS&T	June 2023
		Finalise Café lease	CAO	Dec 2022
		Define additional hire and fee opportunities eg education area and firewood	CAO	Sept 2023
		Explore and implement QR code donation opportunities throughout the park	TL	June 2023
		Run a charitable fun run to support the plan actions	CR	2024
		Investigate the potential of memorial donations to fund park infrastructure / management	ANEM	2024

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The ongoing core funded FCC staff and revenue resource to deliver the plan is detailed in Appendix 2, and is expected to remain constant over the term of the plan.</p> <p>Additional funding to progress development projects will be sourced externally.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Over the summer of 2021 a public consultation was undertaken to inform the development of the Wepre Park management plan. The full responses are detailed in Appendix 3

3.02	A number of workshop style sessions have been held with Local Members, The Friends of Wepre Park and other park stakeholders to inform and shape the plan.
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4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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4.01	There is a low risk that the usage of the park increases to such a degree that the current resource levels are inadequate to deliver the vision. The Access & Natural Environment Service does monitor visitor impact on the site and can respond accordingly around re-prioritisation of wider Service actions.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	Appendix 1 – Wepre Park Site Information Appendix 2 – Wepre Park Maintenance programme and resources Appendix 3 – Wepre Park Public consultation survey response.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	Contact Officer: Tom Woodall, Access & Natural Environment Manager Telephone: 01352 703902 E-mail: tom.woodall@flintshire.gov.uk
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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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7.01	
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WEPRE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022- 2027

Appendix 1

Site Information

1.1 Site details:

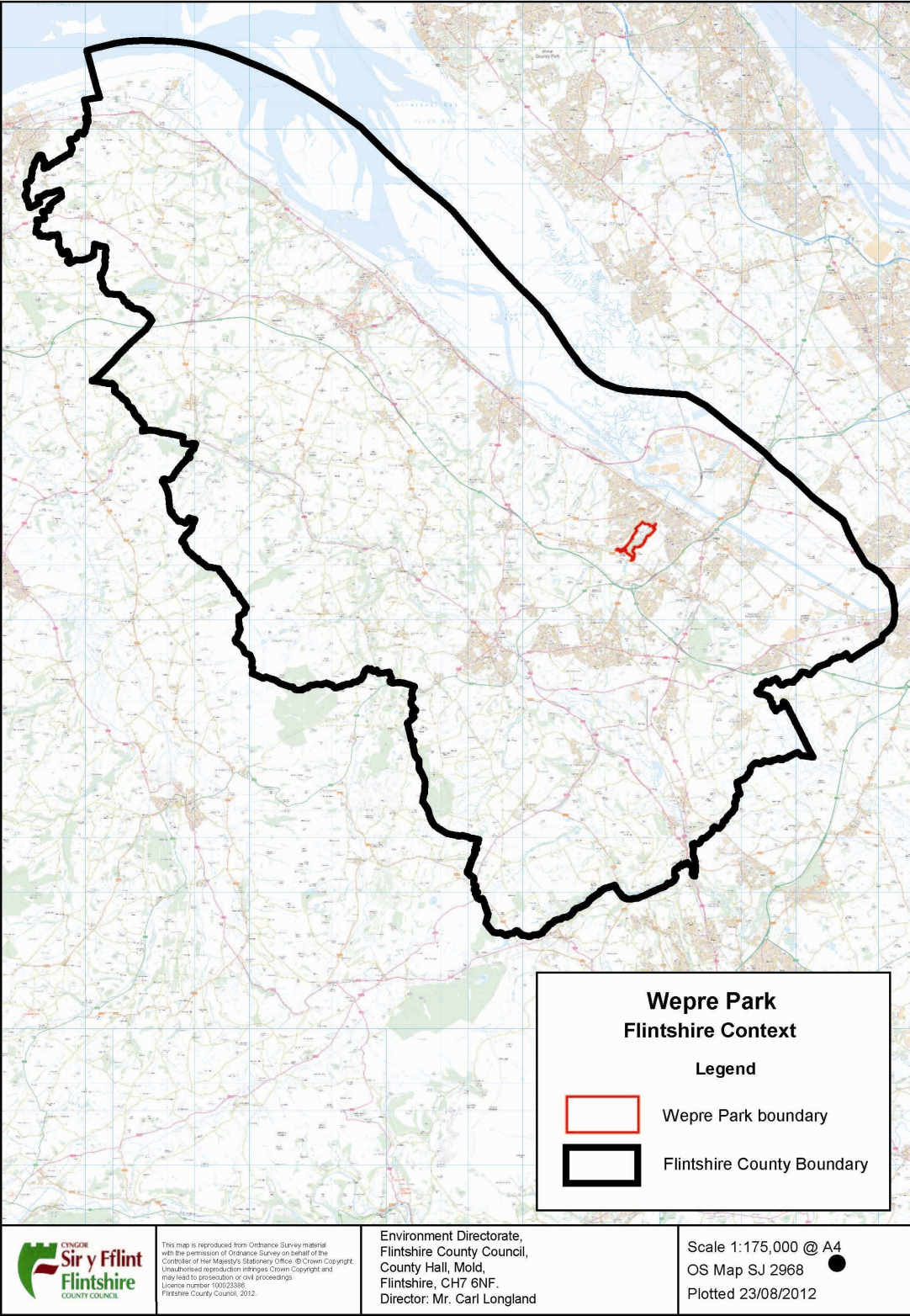
Wepre Park is a 66 hectare urban fringe country park situated in Connah's Quay, Flintshire, Wales. It is one of Flintshire County Council's major recreational sites and has long been a feature that defines Connah's Quay for local people.

The park is multi-functional, currently used for both informal and formal recreation, attracting around 200,000 visitors every year.

The park provides open access to the public. It is open 24 hrs to pedestrians, the car park opening times are dawn to dusk and the visitor centre opening hours are mainly office based during the week and until 3.30pm at weekends.

Beyond the boundaries of the park, there is open countryside to the south and the town of Connah's Quay to the north. With a present population approaching 17,500 (making the town the largest in Flintshire), Connah's Quay is a growing and thriving community within easy reach of Merseyside, Chester and the North Wales coastal resorts and inland towns and villages.

Wepre Park is well located and can be accessed by road from the A55, by rail from the nearby Shotton station and also lies on the National Cycle Network Route 5. It is situated near the region's industrial centre, Deeside Industrial Park. The major part of Tata Steelworks lies on the town's border on the north bank of the River Dee.



1.2 Site description

Wepre is the largest publicly owned country park within Flintshire.

The main features of the Country Park include the remains of Ewloe Castle, remnants of the former Wepre Hall garden, a visitor centre, café, toilets, car park, office and workshop, sports pitches & changing rooms, play area, skate park, angling pond and a network of footpaths throughout the site linking the main habitats of semi-natural ancient woodland, wetland, ponds, streams and grassland.

The majority of the site is mature woodland, either native broadleaf or conifer plantation is managed for a balance of wildlife conservation and informal recreation. Within the woodland there are ponds and clearings and the site is divided by Wepre Brook. The New Inn Brook flows into Wepre Brook at the southern end of the site.

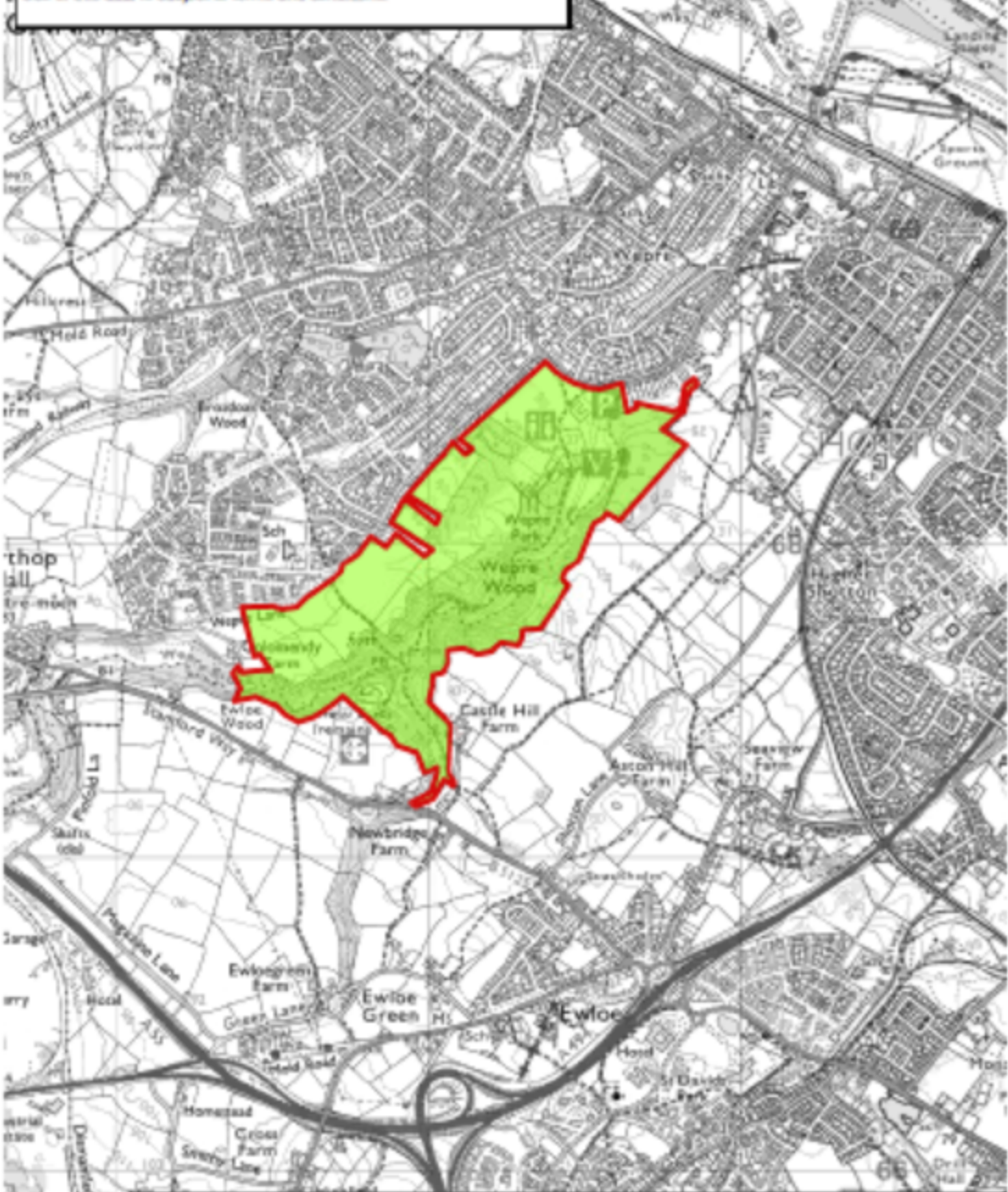
1.3 Access

The park has nine pedestrian access points onto the site distributed around the parks perimeter and is accessible from all sides and one vehicle access point through the main entrance off Wepre Drive into the site's car park.

- Wepre Drive, Connah's Quay, 4 entrances along the front of the park.
- Wepre Lane, Connah's Quay, 2 entrances, 2 kissing gate.
- Ewloe Castle, Access track, 1 entrance, kissing gate.
- Stamford Way, 1 entrance, kissing gate
- Killin's Lane, Shotton, 1 entrance, disabled kissing gate.

The pedestrian access points are accessible through kissing gates. Openings for pushchairs are left at the Killin's Lane entrance and lower Wepre Lane entrance.

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Flintshire County Council
County Hall Raikes Lane
Mold Flintshire CH7 6NF

Parc Gwepia
Wapre Park

28-September-2022



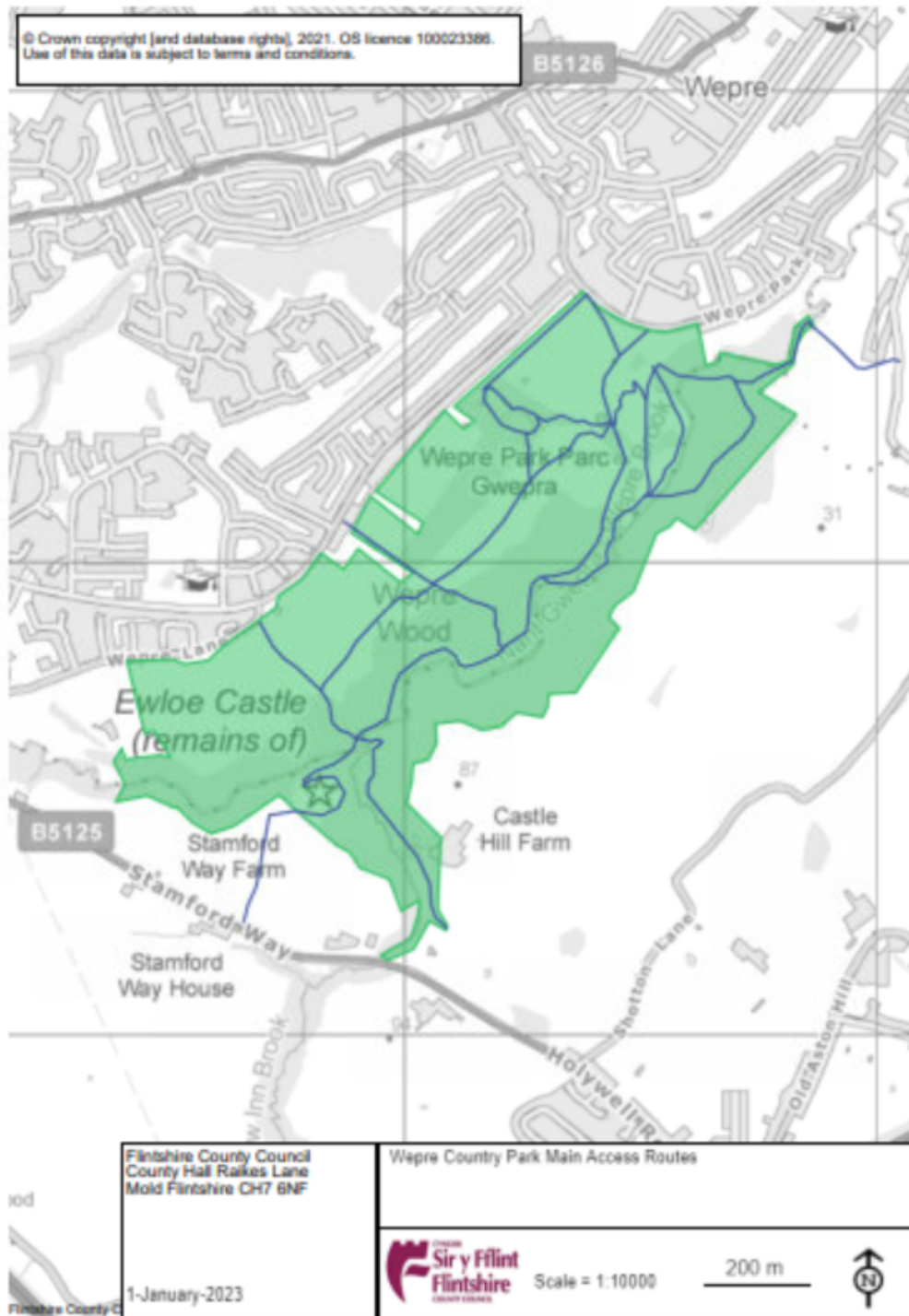
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500 m



1.4 Accessibility

There is disabled parking provision on site and the visitors centre has an accessible toilet. Access to the wider park is limited by the topography of the site and the presence of steps at a number of points on the path network. There is however access along the main track and into parts of the gardens.



1.5 Facilities

The park has an excellent range of facilities including:

- A visitor's centre with café, toilets and education area
- Sports pitches including a football pitch and changing facilities
- Children's play area and skate park.
- Large car park
- A network of paths
- Fishing Pond

1.6 Designations

1.6.1 Statutory Designations

Connahs Quay Ponds and Woodlands Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Deeside and Buckley Newt Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

In 2002 the majority of the site was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for populations of Great Crested Newt, assemblage of widespread amphibian species, and the matrix of semi-natural broad leaved woodland. The SSSI has also formed the basis for the designation of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for Great crested newt populations and Sessile oak woodland under the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

The Directive was set up to create a network of protected wildlife areas across the European Union known as Natura 2000. These sites are part of a range of measures aimed at conserving important or threatened habitats and species which are implemented in the UK under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Natural Resources Wales have a duty to ensure that the SAC is managed favourably for conservation and that the habitats and species are not subject to deterioration or disturbance. In line with this the management and activities at Wepre Park are carried out in close consultation with NRW.

In addition the Local Authority has to ensure that projects undertaken within or adjacent to the SAC do not have a significant effect on the designated features namely great crested newt and the oak woodland. This assessment is a requirement (Regulation 61) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Ewloe Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)

The castle dates from around 1257 and was built by Llywelyn ap Grufford (Llywelyn the Last), the last great independent Prince of Gwynedd. The castle's proximity to the English Border makes it especially interesting given the political history and relationship between the King of England and the Welsh Princes during this period.

The castle was built as a deliberate statement of Welsh ownership of the disputed lands of East Wales, rather than as a fortress. This was one of the most contested regions in the English/Welsh conflict. Much of the castle's fabric survives including the distinctive central tower with its typically Welsh apsidal plan. The castle stands hidden within the woodland and appears today much as it may have done when it was referred to "built in the corner of the wood".

The castle was brought into public ownership in 2015 as part of the HLF project to facilitate greater access to the site

1.6.2 Non- Statutory designations

Wepre Gorge - Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Site (RIGS)

Wepre gorge is of regional geological/ geomorphological importance because it is an exceptional exposure of the Hollin Rock, a cliff up to 20m high which represents a widespread deltic sandstone body within the Flintshire coalfield. It has been designated a RIGS which is a non-statutory designation but represents the most important sites for geology and geomorphology outside statutorily protected *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)*.

Other notable habitats within the site include ponds, streams, wetland and grassland. Wepre Park is an oasis for native birds, plants and animals including several rare and protected species.

Local geological sites have a number of benefits, including:

- providing protection for locally important geological sites;
- increasing public awareness, understanding and enjoyment of rocks, fossils, minerals and landscape;
- providing an environment for people to learn about their local geology;
- forming a focus for partnerships between local authorities, conservation organisations and local people;
- permitting positive management of the geological resource.

Wepre Wood Wildlife Site (WS)

The semi-natural broadleaved woodland has been recognised for its wildlife value since 1985 when it was first designated a Wildlife Site. Other notable habitats within the site include ponds, streams, wetland and grassland.

The combination of woodland and associated habitats make Wepre Park an oasis for native birds, plants and animals including several rare and protected species. Apart from Great crested newts, this includes reptiles such as grass snake and mammals such as otter, bats and badger.

1.7 Habitats

1.7.1 Woodland

Wepre Park is predominately ancient, broadleaved woodland recognised nationally as an SSSI and of European significance through its SAC designation. The broadleaved woodland is the main feature in terms of the site's management and existing management agreements reflect this.

However the historical landscape can be read and interpreted from the tree species planted during the Victorian period. In particular, the presence of conifer species and the single species plantations are important components of the landscape quality of the park.

There is scope to sustainably exploit the high quality timber present whilst encouraging the regeneration of the native woodland. Retention of landscape features and the historically significant trees is also fundamental to the woodland management, as is the encouragement of public access and quiet enjoyment of the woodland.

Following the purchase of the estate by Connah's Quay U.D.C. there was very little management of the woodland until the late 1950's. At this time there was an extensive programme of felling and replanting with commercial species under a woodland dedication scheme. The woodland has been managed under Better Woodland for Wales Scheme which provides a platform to manage the woodland in a sustainable way taking into consideration socio-economic and environmental issues.

In 2021 adjacent fields to Wepre Park were incorporated under the management of the service and was planted with 5,000 trees.

1.7.2 Ponds

Rosy pond (0.5 ha)

The largest pond in the park, managed under lease for angling by Connah's Quay Angling Club.

The Marginal vegetation is sparse, largely restricted to grass and coppice willow. At the west end there is an area excluded from fishing. Yellow flag iris and duckweed are

present here. The pond is a major breeding site for the common toad, which spawns here in large numbers.

Three tier pond

These are three linked ponds fed by the spring which formerly provided water for Wepre Hall. The ponds have high water quality and there is evidence of good invertebrate populations.

The ponds are relatively shallow and overlooked by many trees, so consequently have abundant leaf litter. All three newt species are recorded in this pond.

Brewery pond

This is a large pond with a good mix of vegetation. Although in the woodland, the pond area is relatively clear of trees. The overflow drains under the paths into New Inn Brook. All three newt species are recorded in these ponds.

Taylor's Wood ponds

Four ponds, and several temporary ponds are found in this area of woodland. The largest (known as Taylor's Pond), runs up to the eastern park boundary. There is good vegetation cover with yellow flag, reed mace present. The newt population here declined in recent years due to the introduction of fish. In 1995, the pond was drained and in excess of 100 fish, predominantly carp removed. This has resulted in a recorded increase in the great crested newt population

New Pond was created in 1989, and is situated north of Taylor's pond. It is screened by hawthorn and trees on three sides, and with an open aspect to the east.

There is a good newt population, and several species of damselfly and dragonfly present.

There are two small ponds, probably old coal holes between the two main ponds. Despite its unhealthy appearance, the pond supports a good population of damselflies, especially large red damselfly. Surface vegetation consists entirely of duckweed. There are several depressions in the woodland which retain water over winter and dry up in the summer. The most significant of these is a small area close to the woodland edge which supports a reasonable newt population. This is well screened but tends to be overshadowed by trees.

1.7.3 Streams

Wepre Brook flows through the centre of the park, flowing into the river Dee at Connah's Quay through the Wepre Gutter. The River Dee is also designated as an SSSI and SAC primarily for migratory fish such as Atlantic salmon but also for otter.

The catchment for the brook (and New Inn Brook) reaches to Northop, Buckley and Alltami - where the stream is known as Alltami Brook. The stream is shallow, fast flowing in a well defined channel with little associated vegetation. The exception to this is the area above the dam. At this point the stream regularly floods in winter and there is a level area dominated by horsetail, comfrey, valerian, willow and alder. This area

contains some Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed. These are pulled every year and the population kept under control.

The stream is known to support a population of bullheads and minnows above the dam. Trout and eel have been reported below the dam. Through frequent stream surveys with school groups a good range of invertebrates has been observed, notably fresh water shrimp, caddisfly and stonefly. Two pairs of dippers are recorded as breeding within the park on Wepre Brook and kingfishers are known to nest just outside the park boundary. Otter have been recorded along Wepre brook and there has been past evidence of water vole but no recent records.

The stream level and flow fluctuates throughout the year. There is a rapid response to any period of heavy rainfall which can change a placid water course into a powerful current overnight.

Tufa Deposits

The tufa deposits are an unusual habitat. The presence in the woodland of actively depositing tufa should be retained and damage to the habitat avoided. This has been managed successfully in the past by restricting access and minimising work in the areas. This policy should be continued and the tufa areas monitored.

The wet areas are characterised by pendulous sedge and marsh marigold. The trickling of lime rich water over the soil results in the deposition of tufa. This supports a range of invertebrate species, particularly caddisfly and midge which utilise the tufa for larval cases. This is an unusual habitat in the area and nationally.

1.7.4 Meadows

There are four main areas cut as meadows in the park, and two areas cut as woodland clearings. The meadows are cut once per year, late August, and the cuttings removed.

Dell Meadow

The largest area, with meadow foxtail, cock's foot and Yorkshire fog grasses. Flowering species include southern marsh orchid, yellow rattle, yarrow, pignut and clover.

North End Rosy Wood

This small area is managed as a meadow area but is primarily used as a rough grass buffer between the woodland and the playing fields.

Taylor's Wood, (0.1 ha)

This is a clearing on the eastern boundary. Initially dense growth of nettles and rosebay willow herb were recorded. On the shorter areas, bird's foot trefoil, ground ivy and speedwell's have been found. There is a conflict with cutting for flora and management for great crested newt populations as this site is very close to Taylor's Pond. Management here needs to take the great crested newt population into account.

Red Rock Clearing

Sycamore and birch have been cleared from here to widen the meadow and reinstate a view up the valley to Ewloe Castle and down the valley towards Frodsham. A bench has been installed at this point. The meadow has a good show of spring flora.

Education Area Meadow

A medium sized meadow containing yellow rattle.

1.8.1 European Protected Species

The key species that need to be considered as integral to management are those protected under European legislation (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010) which for this site are great crested newt, otter and all bat species. For these protected species apart from being an offence to deliberately kill or cause significant disturbance, it is also an offence if breeding sites or resting places are damaged or destroyed. Management needs to consider the presence of European protected species and follow good practice guidance to avoid committing an offence. In some cases management practices may need to be modified or rescheduled to a less sensitive time of year, and where this is not possible or adequate then operators may need to apply for a licence to remain within the law. Most activities will be able to continue without the need for a licence through the following of good practice guidance

Management within Wepre Park is undertaken using standard method statements where European protected species are a potential issue. The Better Woodlands for Wales management plan also incorporates management statements for great crested newts and bats.

1.8.2 Other Protected species

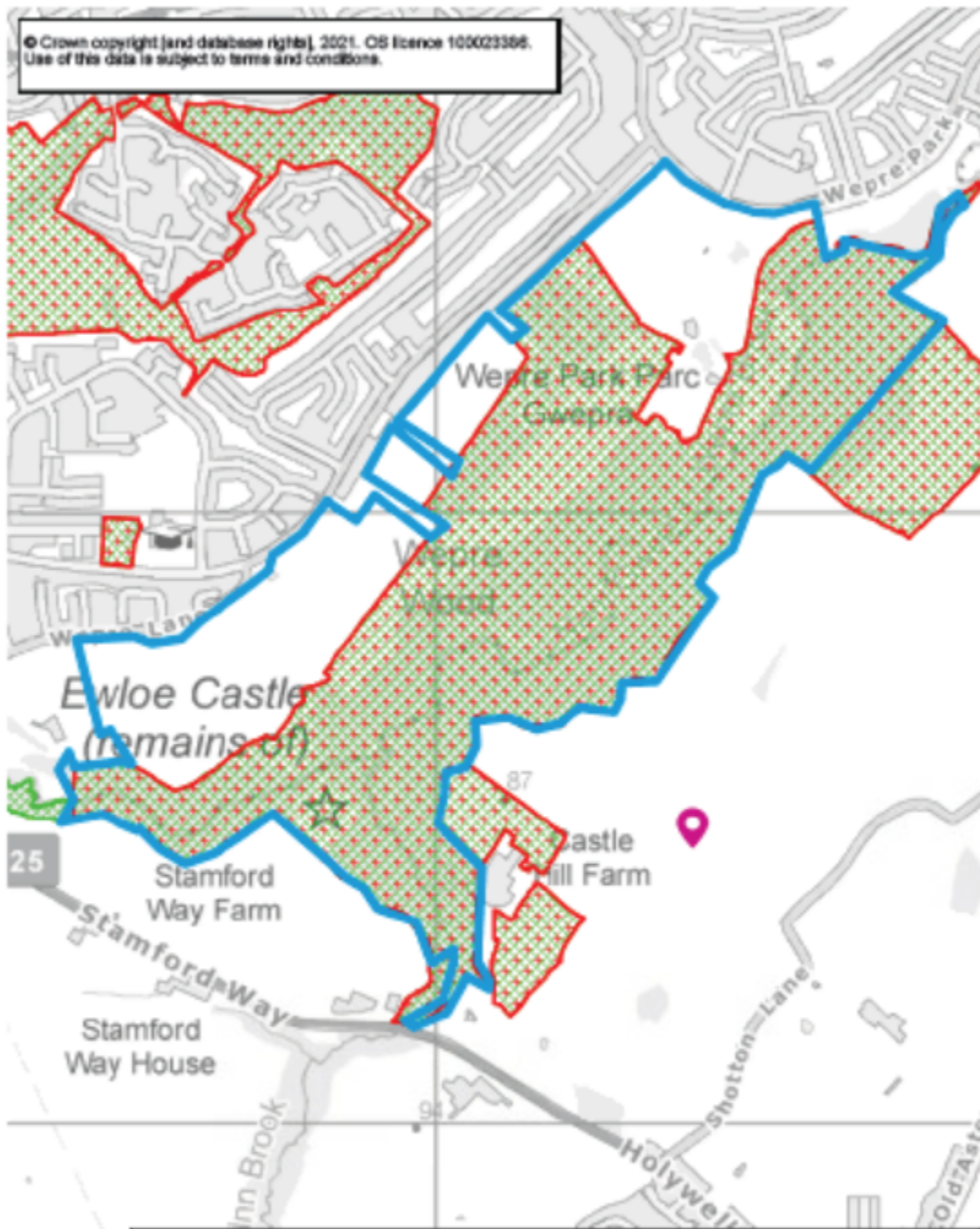
Badgers are protected under the protection of Badgers Act 1992 and it is an offence to destroy or damage a sett or any part of it. Work in close proximity to badger setts are carried out using best practice guidance.

Nesting Birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and it is an offence, to: intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built and to intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird. As with other protected species best practice guidance is followed.

1.8.3 Species of Biodiversity Importance (s42 list)

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, all public bodies have a duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity. In conjunction with this the Welsh Government have produced a list of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance in Wales under Section 42 NERC (hereafter referred to as the S42 list). The S42 list includes all of the habitats and species on the 2007 UKBAP list which actually occur in Wales.

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Flintshire County Council
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Mold Flintshire CH7 6NF

Parc Gwepia ardalosdd ACA a SoDGA
Wepre Park SAC and SSSI areas

28-September-2022



Scale = 1:8308.440

200 m



Flintshire County C

1.8 Tree survey

The woodlands at Wepre are surveyed regularly for H&S as part of the management of the site, including ash dieback and other diseases.

1.9 The Old Hall Gardens

The main periods of influence upon the grounds would have been under the direction of Edward Jones (1788 to 1865) and John Rowden Freme (1865 to 1920). Landscape and garden design philosophies and styles between the 18th and 19th centuries evolved quite considerably, not least during the Victorian age when plant hunting expeditions brought back exotic plants from distant parts of the world, the science of horticulture became established and made these plants more openly available to the public; writing on landscape and garden design spread ideas which responded to art and social attitudes at a time when Britain was at the centre of the industrial revolution; with the rise of wealthy industrialists who wished to express their wealth in the creation of new homes, parks and gardens.

The management of these areas has been minimal over the years, but in 2012-16 a HLF project carried out an extensive restoration. A herb garden and fernery have been added to the garden area during the period of the last management plan.

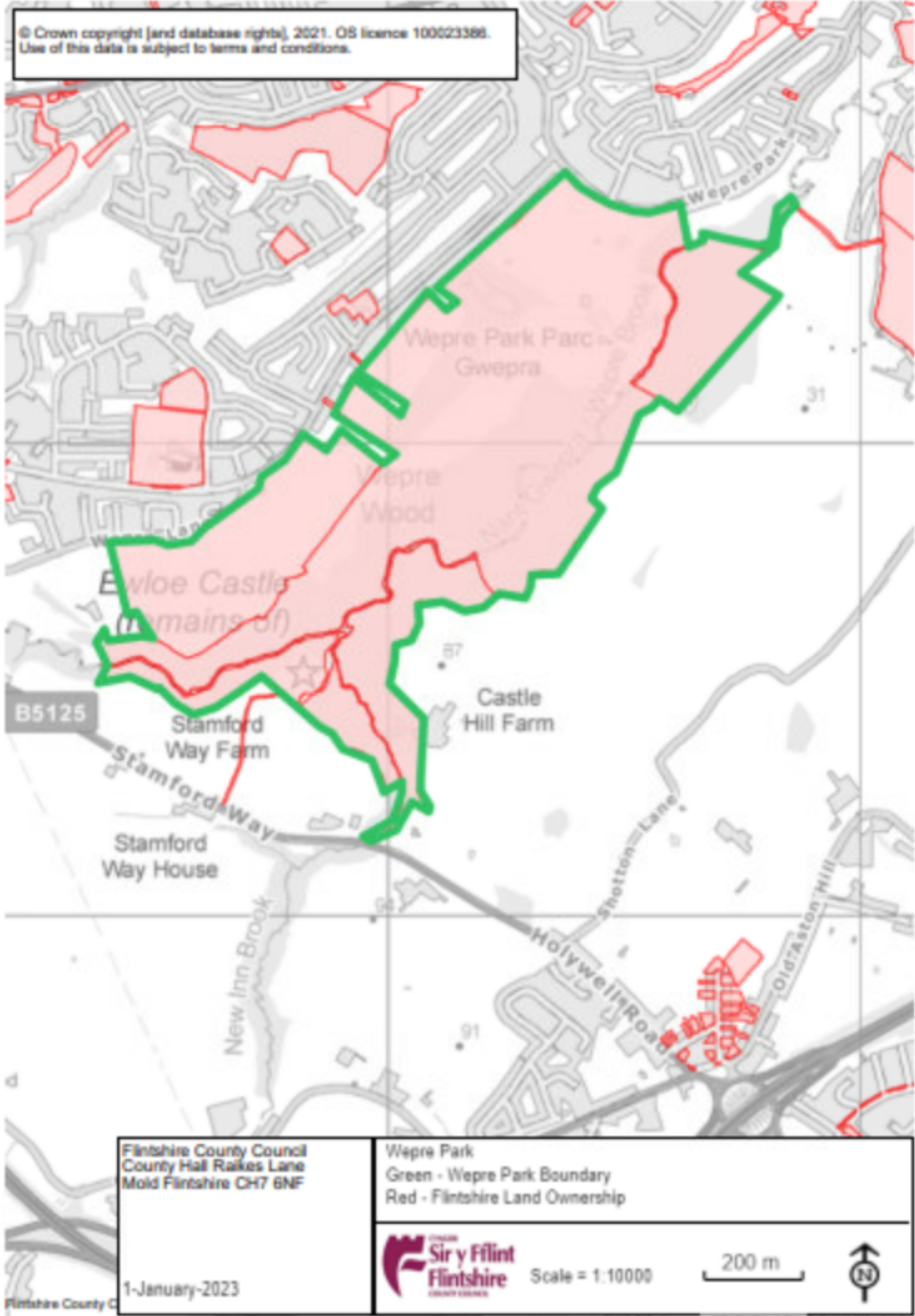
1.10 Geology

Wepre gorge is of regional geological/geomorphological importance because it is an exceptional exposure of the Hollin Rock which represents a widespread deltic sandstone body within the Flintshire coalfield. The Hollin rock at Wepre is a spectacular exposure with a cliff up to 20m high which has been designated a Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)

1.11 Ownership

The park is owned by Flintshire County Council

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1.12 Buildings

On site there are currently a number of buildings including;

Sports pavilion and changing facilities- These are managed by leisure services who have recently secured funding to upgrade the sports pitches and improve the facilities in the pavilion. These will provide the local community with much needed football and sports facilities and will provide park users with another toilet block.

Visitors Centre – incorporating a café, office space (including the historic cellar from the original Old Hall). The café is leased out to private businesses.

Ranger compound consisting of offices and storage

The spring shed above Brewery pond is evidence of past land use associated with Castle Brewery and was where spring water was extracted. The building is in a derelict state and has the potential to convert to a habitat building – providing added biodiversity interest.

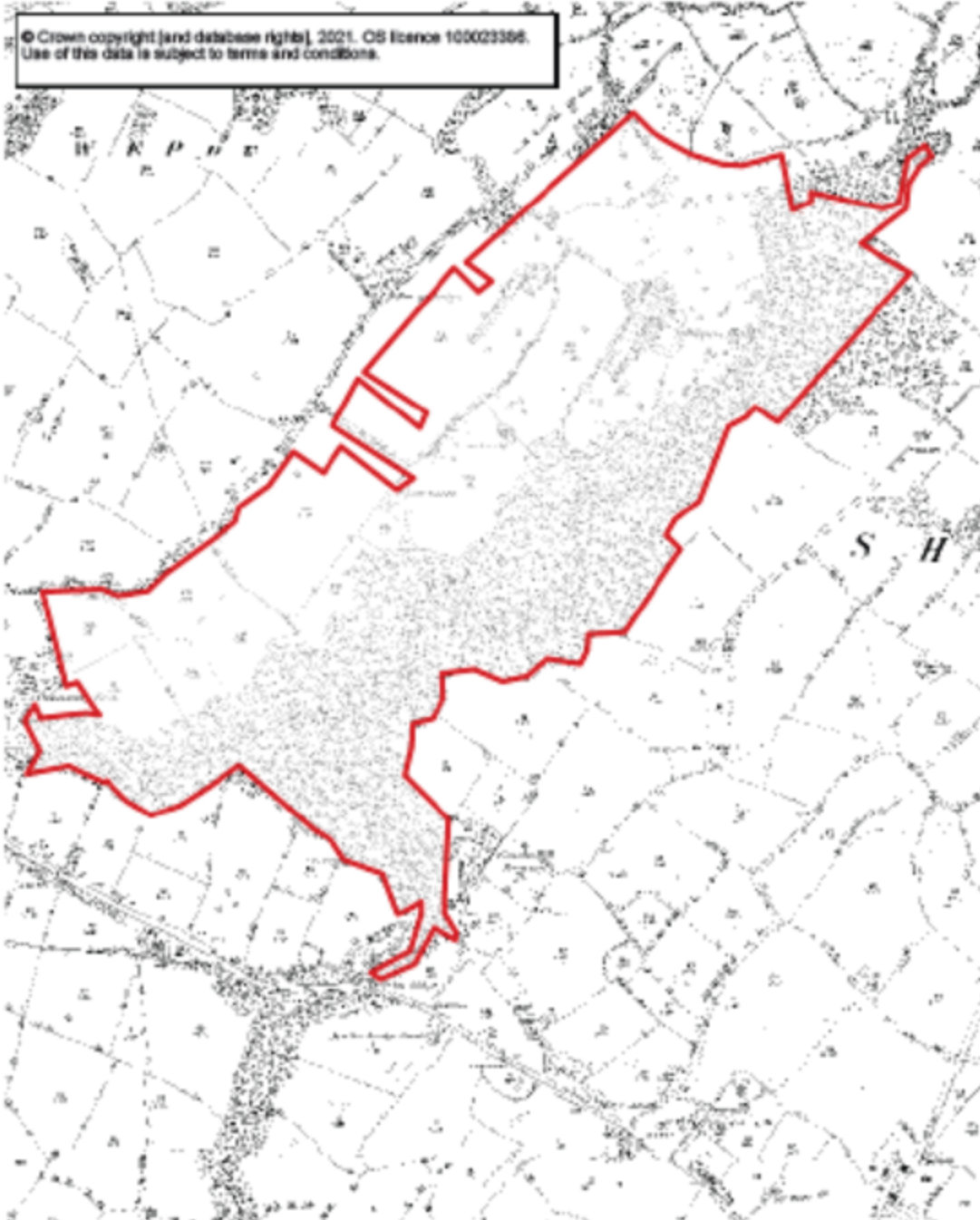
2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The site is recorded as woodland in the Domesday Book. At this time the woodland belonged to St. Werburgh's Abbey, Chester and was 1 1/2 miles long and 3/4 mile wide - roughly its present size.

At the southern end of the park, within easy walking distance of Connah's Quay are the remains of Ewloe Castle, which was originally built in the 13th century and extended in 1257 by the Welsh Princes during the borderland struggles with Edward I. The castle is a unique Welsh design and was built as a deliberate statement to the English, rather than a fort. The castle is under the guardianship of CADW and is a scheduled ancient monument.

The castle and keep are accessible, as is the popular climb through the walls to the remains of the wall walk. The castle was built by the native Welsh of the area during the borderland struggles with Edward I, and his campaigns to occupy and conquer the Welsh kingdom. For many local people, it represents their Welsh roots in a part of Wales that is heavily anglicised.

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Parc Gwepia Map Hanesyddol 1869 - 1895
Wepre Park Historical Map 1869 - 1895

28-September-2022



Scale = 1:8308.440

200 m



Flintshire South

The settlement history of the area is obscure until 1770/1776, when Wepre Hall was built, but there is strong evidence for at least two major residences on the same site going back to the Domesday Book. In the 18th century, formal grounds and gardens were laid out and later extended around 1880. It was at this time that many of the exotic trees associated with the park were planted and the estate extended to some 30 hectares/700 acres. This includes some of the farms that are adjacent to the current park and much of the residential area that is Connah's Quay.

In 1919 the Wepre Hall estate was broken up. The outlying farms were sold and the central portion of the hall and woodlands sold to a developer. In the early 1940's the land was again sold, this time to Connah's Quay Urban District Council.

Following the war the house was used for council housing; the greenhouses and barn eventually became the Council's Parks and Gardens depot and few changes were made.

The old golf course was previously a sand quarry. When this ceased work it was used for domestic refuse landfill. In order to screen this, stands of beech were planted in 1958. At the same time, much of the woodland was felled and replanted with conifer or more commercial species.

In 1960 Wepre Hall was demolished due to its poor state of repair. In the late 1970's approximately 6.25 ha of woodland was compulsory purchased from Killin's Farm. The first management and land use plan was agreed in 1981 and from this time the site has been managed as a country park. It became a SSSI in 2002 for its population of Great Crested Newt, its assemblage of widespread amphibian species and for its semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.

In its heyday, the Estate had greenhouses, stables, two estate cottages, an estate office, a joinery, an annexed billiard room, a fishing lake, boiler rooms, a hydroelectric water-wheel, fountains, formal gardens, formal gates and a drive including a gatehouse, tree-lined avenue and pleasure gardens. It was a significant parcel of land that included most of the area now covered by the centre of Connah's Quay, including the Civic Centre and swimming pool.

Today, the park still retains the landscaping patterns from the 18th and 19th century, as well as the pleasure gardens and several interesting features such as a ha-ha, pet cemetery, the Rosie fishing pool and sections of the walls and remains of prior buildings of the estate.

There are a few surviving local people who remember the Hall and the family that owned it. They can recall the balls and other local traditional events that were held there such as the Easter Sunday walk to Ewloe Castle which, organised by local people continues today on Good Friday every year. They also remember the woodlands when they were managed as an estate rather than an area of open public access.

The existing visitor centre stands on the site of what once was a Saxon dwelling in the 7th century and which later became the site of the Georgian Wepre Hall. The remnants of the Hall's former walled garden remain, as do the original cellars of the Hall beneath the visitor centre. These are used for educational visits to the Park today.

WEPRE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022-2027

APPENDIX 2

2.1 Resources

Wepre Park is currently managed by the Sites Team within the Access & Natural Environment Service with input from other Authority departments such as Aura and Streetscene.

2022 Staffing

POST	MAIN DUTIES	% TIME AT WEPRE	COST
Access & Natural Environment manager	To conserve and enhance the natural environment of Flintshire and to promote its sustainable enjoyment and understanding by the public through the management and development of Flintshire's Countryside and Natural Environment teams	5	£4,100
Team Leader	As part of the Countryside Service management team, the post is responsible for the management, development and promotion of countryside sites and projects for nature conservation and public recreational access within rural Flintshire	20	£11,600
Ranger	Assist in the development, management, maintenance and promotion of Countryside Service and partnership sites. The work will include conservation, public and private sector relations, promotion of environmental awareness through events and education work; maintenance of the linear and circular walks	90	£42,300
Assistant Ranger	Assist in the management and maintenance of countryside sites and promotion of environmental awareness through events and education work.	25	£7,750
Relief Ranger	Assist in the development, management, maintenance and promotion of Wepre Park and Greenfield Valley.	As necessary	£
Admin/finance Officer	To provide an effective and comprehensive administrative support and reception service to the Countryside Service.	30	£5,000

Countryside Awareness Officer	To promote public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the countryside and its heritage. To increase environmental awareness and encourage sympathetic use of the countryside by the public through the provision of high quality information and education services.	25	£11,750
Volunteer support	Non skilled £50 per day	C20 days/month	£12000

Budget	2022/23
Staff	
FCC staff apportioned to Wepre (see table for apportionment)	£94,500
Operations	
Play area maintenance, inspection (Aura)	£5,225
Grass Cutting – (Streetscene)	£3,346
CCTV Monitoring and maintenance and alarms	£6,000
Ewloe Castle	£600
Visitor Centre and premises costs	£29,967
Interpretation and publicity	£1,000
Site maintenance budget to include:	£5,235

	Site infrastructure	
	Path maintenance	
	Woodland management/tree works	
	Old Hall Garden maintenance	
Total operations		£51,373
Total Staff & operations		£145,873

Aura and Streetscene manage the Play Area and Skate Park and the mowing of the Leisure areas including all the grass around the car park, play area, football pitches and skate park.

The Valuation and Estates Portfolio manage the pavilion on site.

The Access and Natural Environment Team secure external grants for development projects, including habitat works, access management and visitor services.

2.2 Annual maintenance programme

Feature	Responsibility	Funding	Year
1.Wepre Brook			
1.1 Overhanging branches/trees managed to create areas of open/dapple/shade on water	CR	FCC	Annual
1.2 Fallen trees and branches removed which may affect flow to dam and to stone bridge	CR	FCC	Annual

1.3 Monitor flow and areas of erosion and consider remedial management through revetment	CR	NRW FCC	Annual
1.4 Survey and management of non-native species, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed Manage bracken, blackthorn regeneration and ragwort in new fields.	CR	NRW FCC	Annual
1.5 Remove in-water litter at lowest flow	CR	FCC	Annual
2.Ponds			
2.1 Rosy Pond – All fishing platforms are monitored for damage and repaired when necessary. Liaise with club and review lease as necessary.	Connah's Quay Angling Club	CQAC	Annual
2.2 Aquatic vegetation. Maintain 33-50% open water	CR	NRW FCC	3 year rotation Bank side year 1, aquatic side year 2, leave pond from works year 3
2.3 Bank-side vegetation Cut 3m from edge on south side to prevent shade and leaf litter.	CR	NRW FCC	3-year rotation
2.4 Survey and management of non-native species	CR	NRW FCC	Annual
2.5 Maintain pond numbers.	CR	NRW FCC	Annual

2.6 Survey by torch for newt spp.	CR	NRW FCC	Annual
2.7 De-silt ponds – Taylor’s and Brewery	CR	NRW FCC	Year 1 and 3 Taylor’s – year 1, Brewery year 3 (was desilted in 2015)
3.Access and Infrastructure			
3.1 Carry out patrols to monitor and flag up any issues such as vandalism or damage and to litter pick.	CR	FCC	Weekly
3.2 All main footpaths are surveyed weekly to assess for problems such as erosion, trip hazards. Surfacing when required. Paths are cut back of encroaching vegetation	CR	FCC	Weekly Monthly from May-Sept
3.3 Open Drainage Ditches are cleared out to allow water flow. French drains renew 1 x 10 yrs.	CR	FCC	Annual 3 month check
3.4 Interpretation Panels/Signs Restoration as and when needed. Painted/varnished.	CR	FCC	Annual check, renewed year 5
3.5 Steps and Bridges checked Leaves and debris are cleared off Topped with dust and maintained when required.	CR	FCC	Monthly Annual - Dec

3.6 Fencing/Gates are checked and repaired when required	CR	FCC	Annual.
3.7 Bins/Benches are replaced when damaged. Benches are put in from milled timber from Wepre's Woods and are replaced when worn. Since 2021 Volunteers and members of the public litter pick the park as part of Keep Wales Tidy Litter Picker Champions scheme. Averaging 16 bags / month in high season.	CR + volunteers etc.	FCC	High season – twice daily, more on bank holidays. Low season – every other day The front of park is cleared of litter daily.
4. Meadows - Dell, Red Rock, Taylor's, Compound, Rosie, Education Area, New woodland fields.			
4.1 All meadows are cut, raked and baled once flowers have seeded.	CR / Contractor	FCC	Sept – Oct Annual
4.2 Paths cut through	CR	FCC	May – Sept Monthly
5. Hedges			
5.1 Front hedge and play area hedge cut 3 times in high season May to Sep All other hedges are cut end of February to retain berries for wintering wildlife.	CR	FCC	3 times in High Season Annually

6. Trees			
6.1 Trees adjacent to footpaths, buildings, recreational areas and boundaries are checked for health, damage and works are carried out as soon as possible on recommendation.	CR / FCC Tree Inspector	FCC	Annual
Ash Die Back Survey when trees have flushed	CR		May / June
Maintain new plantings.	CR		
Over hanging branches on main footpaths are cut back annually.	CR		July-Sept
Remove fallen trees/branches on paths when necessary			

Play

Weekly inspections are carried out by the play team within Leisure services and equipment is replaced/repared as required.	Aura	Aura	Weekly
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Grass cutting regime

Cut grass on pitches and front fields	Streetscene	FCC	Weekly / monthly seasonal variance
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Activity

9.1 Education programme	CR / AO	FCC	Summer term
9.2 Events programme	AO / CR /Partners	FCC	Annual
9.3 Support groups and schools in activity	AO / CR /Partners		
9.4 Deliver talks to external groups	CR	Group	

2.3 Woodland Management Grant Scheme

Wepre Park Better Woodlands for Wales Commitment and Review

Signed 2012

10 years through a 20 year commitment.

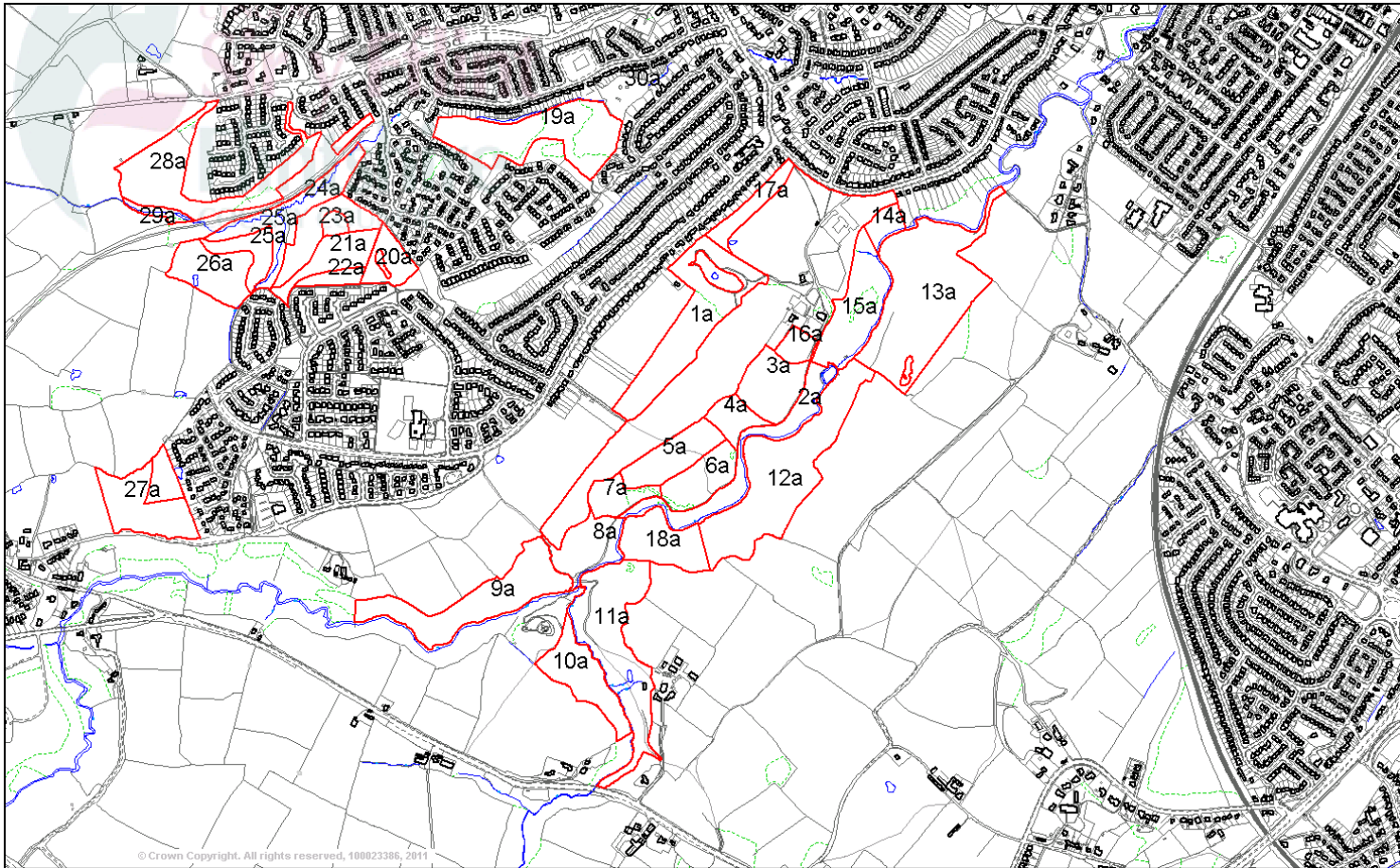
Licence 2018 to 2023 (Expires 21/10/2023)

Operation Group Harvesting

Compartment	Location	Activity	BWW Status	Status	Comments
Cpt 11a	Wepre	Thin	Partially thinned	Ongoing	Function retained in thinning licence.
Cpt 17a	Wepre	Clean & Respace	Completed	Ongoing	Infected ash marked for removal 2022-23.
Cpt 2a	Wepre	Thin	Partially thinned	Ongoing	Function retained in thinning licence.
Cpt 3a	Wepre	Thin	Partially thinned	Ongoing	Function retained in thinning licence.
Cpt 4a	Wepre	Thin	Completed	Ongoing	Monitor stocking levels due to ADB
Cpt 6a	Wepre	Thin	Completed	Ongoing	Monitor stocking levels due to ADB
Cpt 8a	Wepre	Thin	Partially thinned	Ongoing	Target further removal of Hemlock and Turkey oak regeneration Maintenance programme only. Now access developed to Devils Basin
Cpt 9a	Wepre	Thin	Incomplete	On hold	
Cpt 1a	Wepre	Thin	Completed	Ongoing	Monitor stocking levels due to ADB
Cpt 5a	Wepre	Thin	Completed	Ongoing	Monitor stocking levels due to ADB
Cpt 7a	Wepre	Thin	Completed	Ongoing	Monitor stocking levels due to ADB
Cpt 9a	Wepre	Coppicing	Incomplete	On hold	Maintenance programme only.
Cpt 10a	Wepre	Thin	Completed	Ongoing	Monitor stocking levels due to ADB Monitor stocking levels due to ADB and consider replanting alder carr.
Cpt 19a	Wepre	Thin	Completed	Ongoing	
Cpt 24a	Wepre	Thin	Completed	Ongoing	Monitor stocking levels due to ADB.
Cpt 29a	Broadoaks	Thin	Incomplete	Ongoing	Function retained in thinning licence.

Cpt 18a	Wepre	Selective Fell	Incomplete	Ongoing	Target further removal of Hemlock and Turkey oak regeneration
Cpt 12a	Wepre	Thin	Incomplete	Ongoing	Monitor stocking levels due to ADB.
Cpt 13a	Wepre	Thin	Partially thinned	Ongoing	Function retained in thinning licence.
Cpt 8-12	Wepre	Hab	Incomplete	On hold	Bird and bat box programme cancelled.

Wepre and Connah's Quay Woodland Compartment Plan (excludes newly planted extension area to the east)



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2021 Wepre Management Plan Survey

A visitor survey was undertaken at Wepre Country Park between September and October 2021 to provide a bench mark of people's views about the park and inform its future management. 512 people completed the questionnaire. The majority of those who responded were between 31 and 65 year old (83%) with just over 10% older than 65 years old and only 5% younger than 30 years old.

86.6% of respondents lived within 5 miles of Wepre park demonstrating the importance of the park to the local community, of these 43.3% lived within 1 mile. It is encouraging to note that over half of those surveyed (53%) walk to the park whilst just over 40% had arrived by car. Very few people use public transport to visit the park, despite a bus stop being conveniently located a 5 minute walk away. Only 3.1% of respondents did not have access to a car. The majority of people (60.2%) visited the park with their family with just over a quarter visiting alone (27%).

The Survey clearly showed the value of Wepre Park for the health and wellbeing of the local community with over 50% of people using the park at least once a week and of these 11% used the park on a daily basis, 15.9% of those who responded used the park less than once a month. Walking is by far the most frequent activity undertaken (72.7%) followed by park run (6.8%) and wildlife watching (4.6%). Over half of responders owned a dog.

Three quarters of people felt that Wepre Park was good or excellent in delivering against the vision of being welcoming, valued and enjoyed, whilst protecting its heritage and allowing wildlife to flourish. The majority of people also felt that the park delivered well as multifunctional facility which is safe, clean and able to be enjoyed by everyone, that the special wildlife qualities are protected, enhanced and maintained and that its heritage is protected, conserved and celebrated. Less than half of respondents felt that the Park performed good / excellent in raising public awareness about the special features of the site, enriched through events, education and interpretation. Just over a third of people felt that community involvement in the park was maximized to a good standard.

When asked what improvements people would like to see at Wepre Park in 10 years' time, a number of responses stated that they would like to see the park stay as it is. Improving access for disabled users, particularly to Ewloe castle was noted as was improvements to disabled car parking. More bins were highlighted and a dog poo bin by the castle. Tackling anti-social behavior, together with an increased staff presence and police patrols and improved security were raised. Concerns were noted about increased visitor pressure and path erosion. Improvements for wildlife were suggested, as was improved paths for walks on the further side of the river, a bike pump track, development of the play area, an outdoor splash zone / pool and keeping public access to the Rosie.

When asked what facilities people would like to see the most frequent answers were more seats, better toilets, bins, zip wire/ go ape and CCTV. A number of respondents noted that they did not wish to see further developments at the park and wanted it kept natural. Other comments received included outdoor cinema, forest school activities for schools, more parking, high ropes, petting zoo, camping at specific times, a seasonal market, path on the further side of the river, better play area, secure area for dog exercise, summer pool, bike trail, running track around the football pitches and a sculpture trail.

The most frequent response as to how the park could secure resources towards its management was to introduce car parking charges. Other suggestions made were a donation scheme, events including dog walks, runs, treasure hunts, santa walks, car boot sales, cyclo cross, farmers market, business sponsorship, crowd funding to buy land, sponsor a tree/bench, selling wood, gift shop, café improvements, raffle, hiring the fields for events, chargeable education events, celebrity ambassadors, festivals and children's parties. Comments were received that the park should be sufficiently resourced publically and that charges should not be introduced. Others noted that if car parking charges were implemented a local permit should be introduced.

In response to how the park could respond to the challenge of climate change people suggested the planting of trees, a refill water bottle station at the visitor centre, electric car charging points, getting rid of parking, introducing car parking charges, using electric vehicles, stopping the use of plastic, increasing recycling facilities, expanding the park through land purchase, increasing people's awareness, renewable energy generation through solar panels and hydroelectric, increasing the frequency of public transport and cycle links, composting toilet and aim to be carbon neutral.

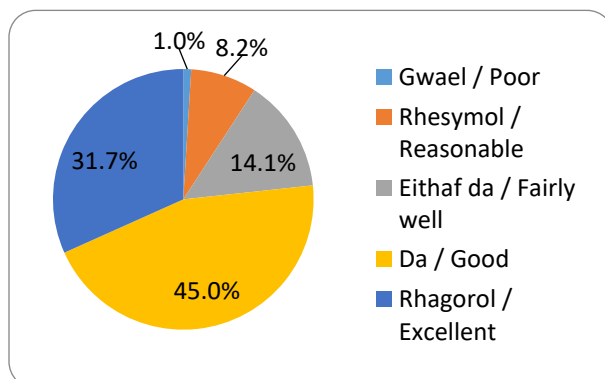
In ranking future work at Wepre Park people put wildlife protection as being the most important followed by path maintenance and community involvement / education. Events and formal sports ranked the lowest.

Wepre Country Park Survey Questions

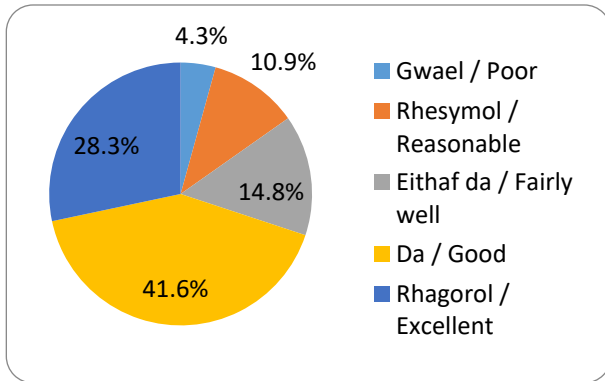
We are keen to receive your views about Wepre Country Park, how it is managed and what you would like to see in the future. Your views will help us plan our work for the next 10 years. Please skip any questions if you have no comment, or that you do not wish to answer.

First we would like to hear your thoughts about the current management of Wepre Country Park.

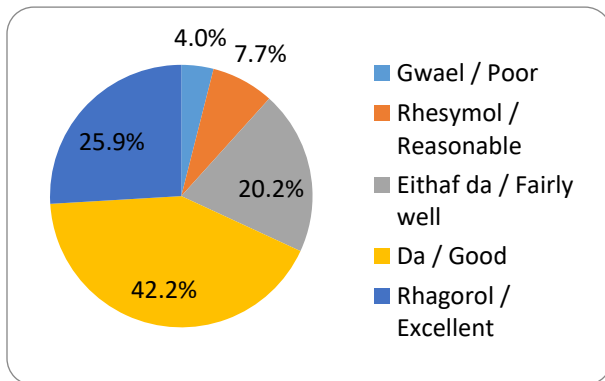
1. Wepre Country Park strives to be welcoming, valued and enjoyed, whilst protecting its heritage and allowing wildlife to flourish. How well do you feel that the Country Park delivers against this vision?



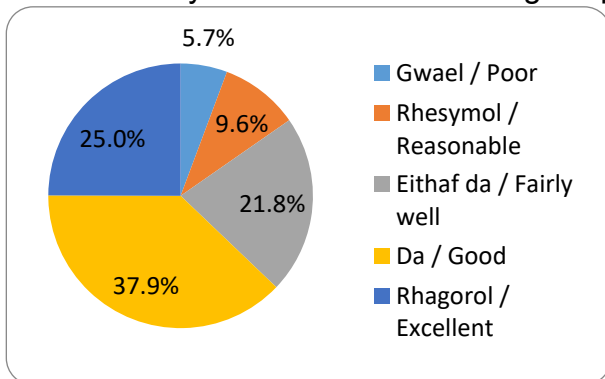
2. How do you rate Wepre Country Park as a multifunctional facility which is safe, clean and able to be enjoyed by everyone?



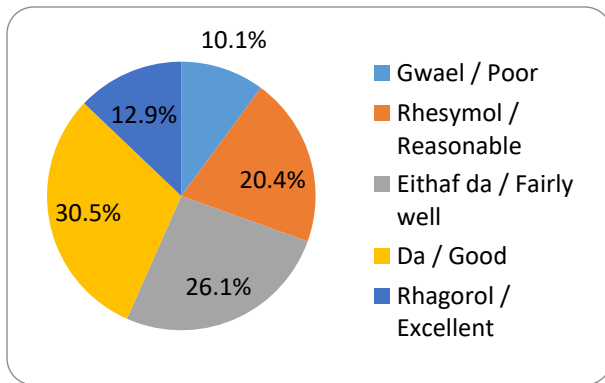
3. How well do you feel the special wildlife qualities are protected, enhanced and maintained at Wepre Country Park?



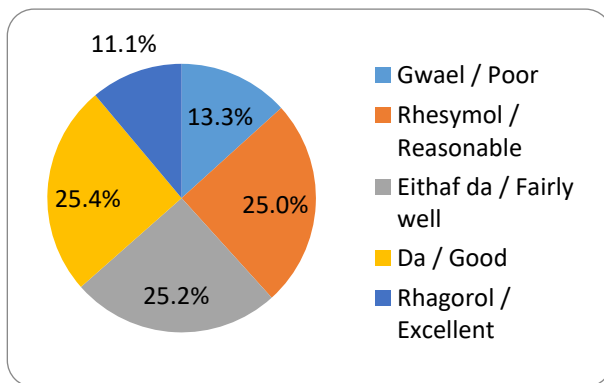
4. How well do you feel the site's heritage is protected, conserved and celebrated



5. How well do you feel the park delivers for public awareness about the special features of the site, enriched through events, education and interpretation? Poor / Reasonable / Fairly well / Good / Excellent



6. How well do you feel that community involvement is maximised within Wepre Country Park?



7. Do you have any comments you would like to make about the current management of Wepre Country Park?

Next we would like to hear about your views about the future

8. Please rank the following areas from 1 to 8 in terms of their priority for future work at Wepre Country Park (with 1 being the most important and 8 the least important)

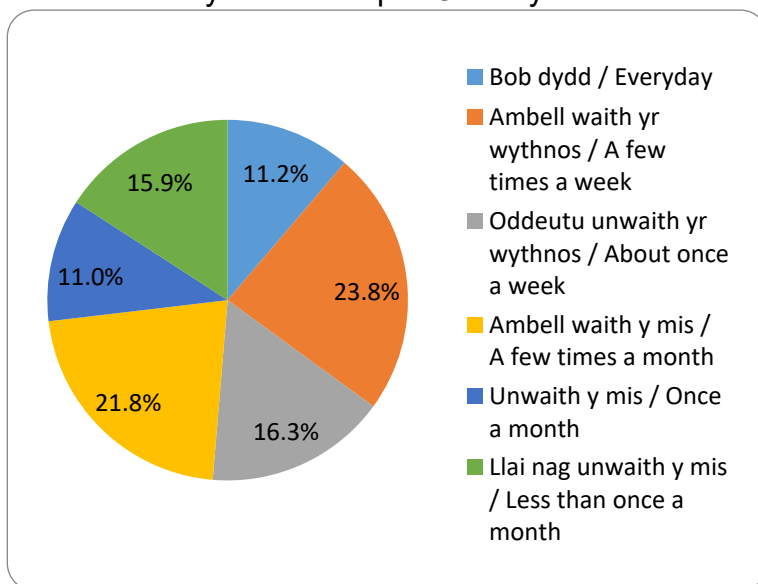
Answer Choice	Total Score	Overall Rank
1 Diogelu bywyd gwylt / Wildlife Protection	3221	1
2 Cynnal a chadw mynediad / llwybrau / Access / Path Maintenance	2423	2
3 Ymgysylltu â'r gymuned / gwirfoddoli / Community involvement / volunteering	2241	3
4 Addysg Awyr Agored / Outdoor education	2165	4
5 Cyfleusterau Ymwelwyr / Visitor Facilities	2028	5

6	Ardal Chwarae / Play Area	1728	6
7	Digwyddiadau / Events	1680	7
8	Chwaraeon Ffurfiol / Formal Sports	1109	8

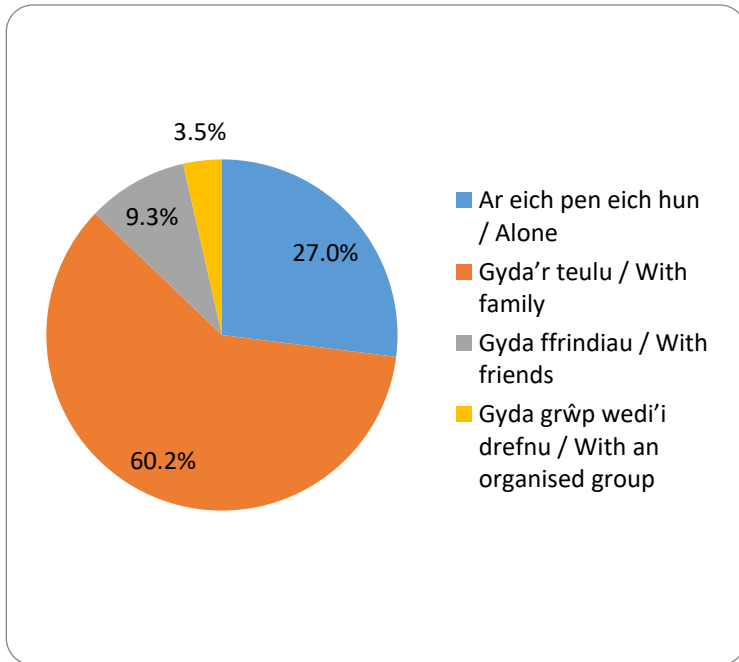
9. What improvements would you like to see at Wepre Country Park over the next 10 years?
10. Do you feel that there is anything missing at Wepre Country Park that the park could offer?
11. Securing resources to fund work at Wepre Country Park is a challenge, have you got any suggestions as to how the Park could increase its income in future?
12. Climate change is a global challenge, have you got any suggestions of how Wepre Country Park can make a possible contribution towards reducing climate change?

We would like to find out a little bit about you to understand our audience better

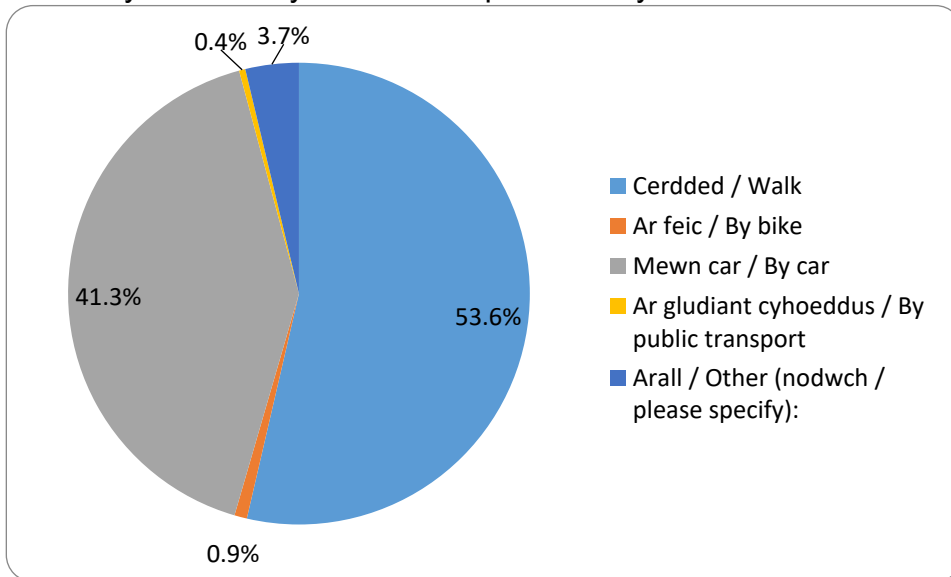
13. How often do you visit Wepre Country Park?



14. Do you normally visit

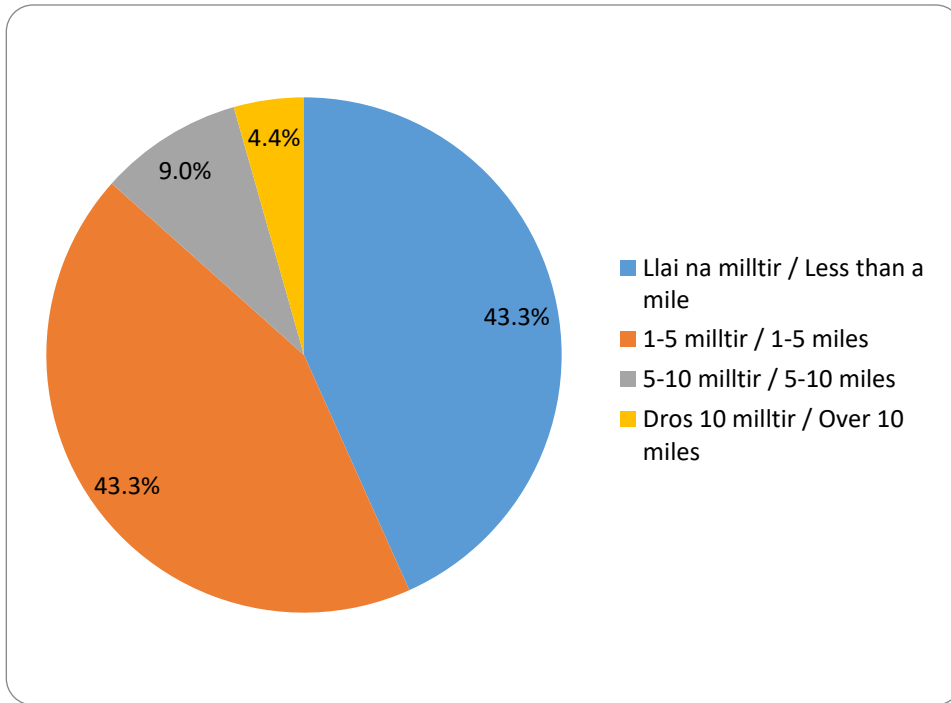


15. How do you normally travel to Wepre Country Park?

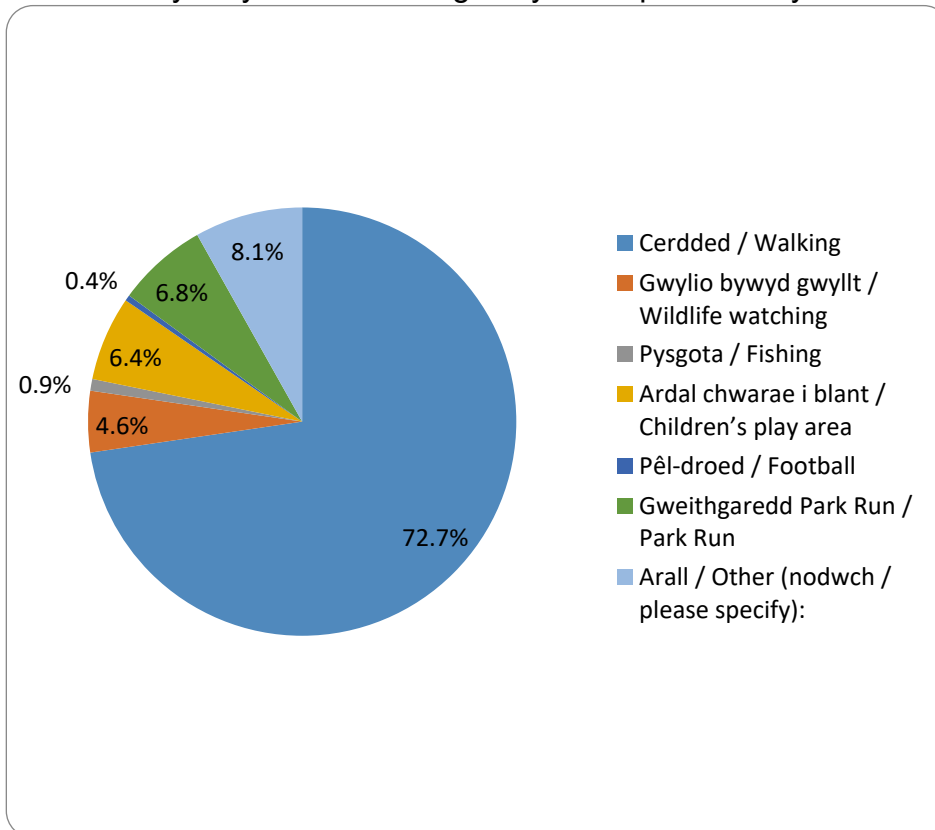


People who noted other commented that they ran to the park or used a mixture of walking / car.

16. How far do you live from Wepre Country Park?

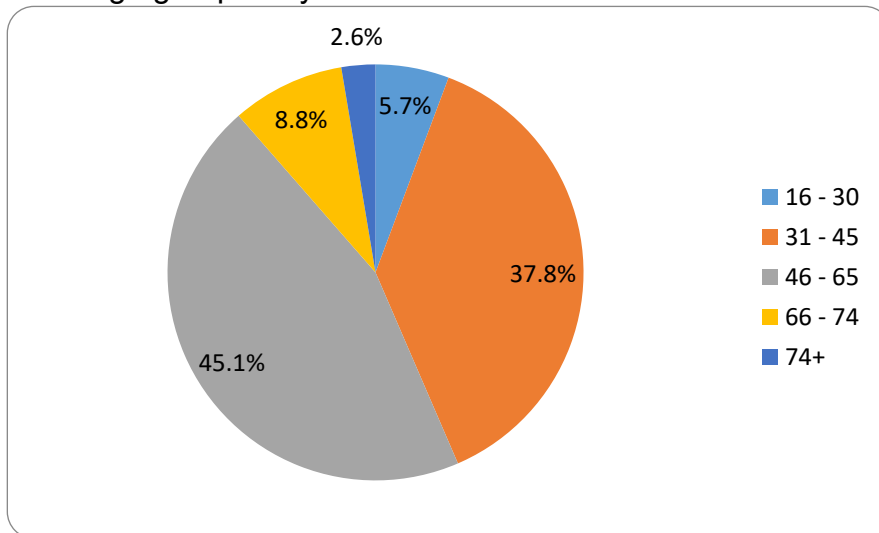


17. What activity do you do most regularly at Wepre Country Park?

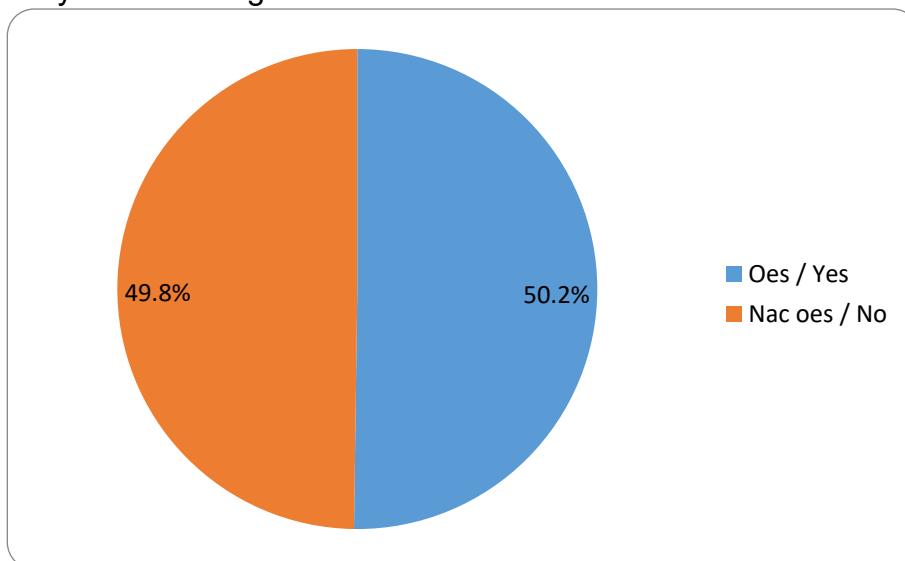


Other activities that were noted (8.1%) were walking the dog, forest school, skateboarding and running independently.

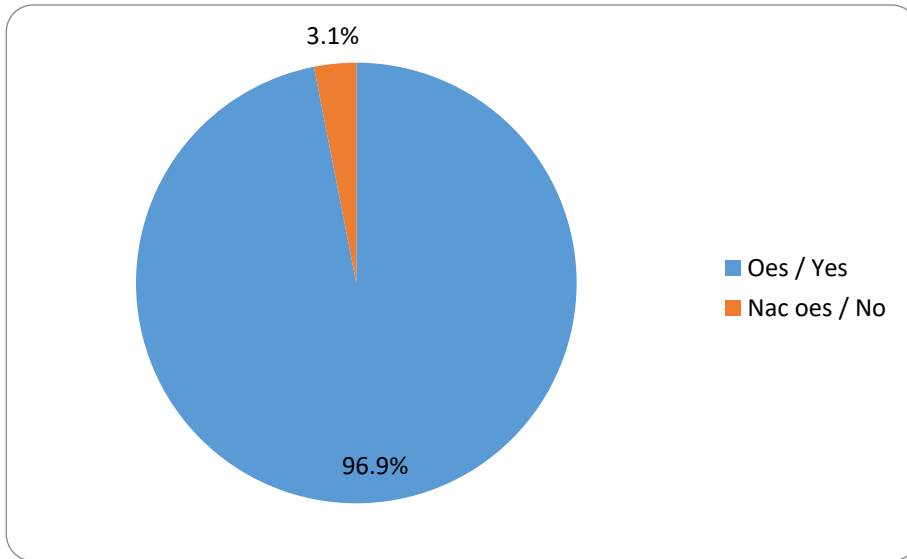
18. What age group are you?



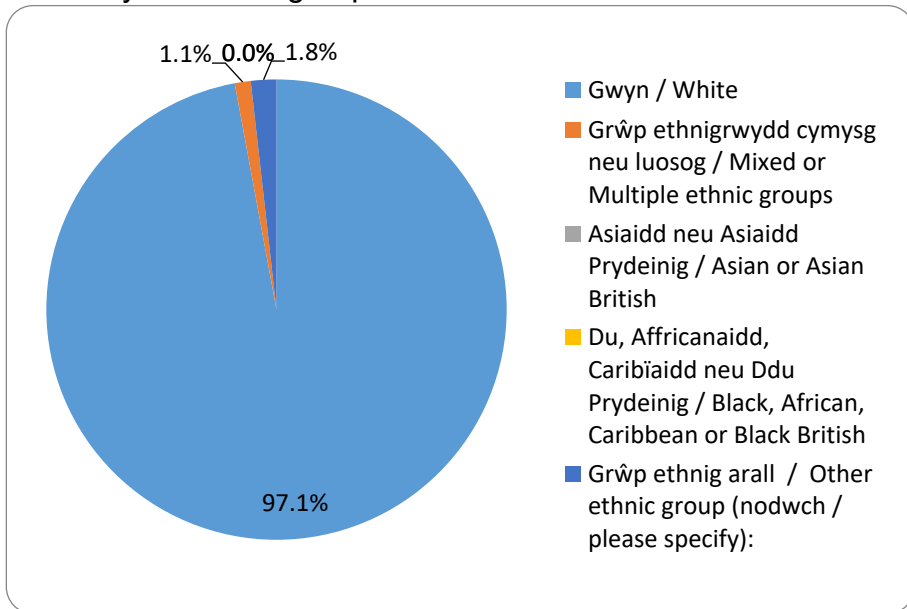
19. Do you own a dog?



20. Do you have access to a car?



21. What is your ethnic group?



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ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 7 th February 2023
Report Subject	Open Spaces and Highway Memorial Policy
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Report Author	Chief Officer for Planning, Environment and Economy
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Due to the increasing demand for memorials in a openspace, countryside or highway setting, it is necessary to draw up a policy to ensure memorials are in keeping with the character of the local setting and its many and varied uses and users. This report details the proposed policy and principles to ensure a consistent and sensitive approach to the provision of memorial requests.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet approves the policy
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE OPENSACES MEMORIAL POLICY
1.01	It is part of all human culture to mark memorable occasions such as birthdays, deaths and anniversaries. Members of the public often wish to mark such occasions in areas of openspace with something more permanent. They may also wish to contribute to the wider natural environment and benefit others. There is also an increasing tendency for relatives and friends to place flowers and other tributes at the scene of fatal road traffic accidents, which can be a source of comfort. There have

	also been requests for more permanent memorials and this report is intended to advise on this very sensitive subject.
1.02	There is no legislative requirement for the provision of memorial items although it is accepted that they provide a useful and valued public amenity and are also valued by the individuals and families who make the requests. Flintshire County Council has provided opportunity in the past on an ad-hoc basis for people to purchase trees or benches in memory of a loved one.
1.03	Due to the increasing demand for memorials in an openspace or a countryside setting, it is necessary to draw up a policy to ensure memorials, permanent or otherwise, are in keeping with the character of the local countryside and its many and varied uses and users. A memorial site to one individual is a very different site to another, and these diverse interests should be respected. Additionally, there is no specified cut-off time for when grieving should end, and each individual case should be considered on its own unique merits. Above all, the countryside should remain a place for all to enjoy, as well as a place of significance for those wishing to remember occasions and loved ones.
1.04	This policy recognises the need for a consistent and sensitive approach to the provision of memorial requests and acknowledges that the demands for memorials may be far greater than some sites can accommodate. It is recognised that this is a sensitive issue and the proposed policy seeks to balance concerns about safety, environmental sustainability and the wishes of those who may want to lay flowers or place memorials as a mark of respect.
1.05	This policy allows for memorials outside of the traditional cemetery setting, but should not be seen as a replacement. Cemetery memorials are governed by specific regulations and policies, which can be found through this link: https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Funerals,-Cremations--Bereavement/Memorials.aspx
1.06	Memorial Policy Statement Requests for memorials in openspace, countryside or highway settings, whether physical structures or natural features, are welcomed. They should be a feature that conserves or enhances the character of the setting and people's enjoyment of the outdoors as a recreational resource and place of quiet enjoyment. There may be exceptions to this for reasons of road safety or if the memorial interferes with highway maintenance or causes a distraction or obstruction to other road users, such as pedestrians or cyclists. In such cases, sensitive approaches should be made to those who have placed the memorials to explain the situation. Where the person responsible for placing the memorial is unknown and it presents a road safety risk, it may have to be removed; however, as outlined above, each case should be considered on its individual merits. In principle, providing that the memorial has no detrimental effect on road safety and it does not affect the ability to carry out highway maintenance then it may be acceptable.

1.07	<p>Policy principles</p> <p>There are 13 principles which will be applied in considering requests and making decisions or memorials and will also set out the principles of the type of memorial to be approved, the location, its safety and future maintenance and replacement.</p>
1.08	<p>The principals also contain reference to the prohibition of releasing of balloons and lanterns due to the potential risks and impact to the countryside of litter fire, animal welfare and wildlife.</p>
1.09	<p>Other Information</p> <p>Examples of appropriate memorials could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting an un-marked tree • Planting a hedge or small orchard • Contributing to a woodland planting • Benches • Kissing Gate or small bridges • Installing bird or bat boxes • Conservation of a historic feature • Wildflower planting • Sponsoring an event
1.10	<p>Legacy donation</p> <p>Alternatively someone may just prefer to give a donation to the Countryside Service to help maintain and enhance the landscape that people use and enjoy.</p> <p>Examples of donations could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoring a section of stone wall. • Improving eroded path • Restoring a wildlife feature

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Potential positive resource implication through additional income
2.02	Potential costs for removal of inappropriate memorials

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Internal colleagues in the Streetscene & Transportation portfolio.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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4.01	This can be a very sensitive issue and, if handled badly, can cause distress, upset and potential reputational damage to the Authority, however there is minimal risk associated with the proposed policy.
4.02	There are conflicting issues with memorials placed within the highway. The placement and maintenance of memorials can in itself involve a road safety risk. A memorial can act as a warning to road users of the possible dangers at the location, but it can also create a hazard to other road users, either as a distraction to passing motorists or as an obstruction to pedestrians and cyclists. There may also be a risk to grieving friends or relatives who attend the location to pay their respects or maintain the memorial, particularly on high speed roads.
4.03	Memorials that are placed inappropriately may also interfere with routine maintenance of the highway, such as grass cutting. There may also be a risk to maintenance operatives for the removal / maintenance of memorials within the highway, depending upon the location.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Openspaces & Highway Memorial Policy

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	

Open Spaces and Highway Memorial Policy

Flintshire County Council

Introduction

It is part of all human culture to mark memorable occasions such as birthdays, deaths and anniversaries. Members of the public often wish to mark such occasions in areas of openspace with something more permanent. They may also wish to contribute to the wider natural environment and benefit others.

There is also an increasing tendency for relatives and friends to place flowers and other tributes at the scene of fatal road traffic accidents, which can be a source of comfort. There have also been requests for more permanent roadside memorials.

There is no legislative requirement for the provision of memorial items although it is accepted that they provide a useful and valued public amenity and are also valued by the individuals and families who make the requests. Flintshire County Council has provided opportunity in the past on an ad hoc basis for people to purchase trees or benches in memory of a loved one.

Due to the increasing demand for memorials in an openspace, countryside or roadside setting, it is necessary to draw up a policy to ensure memorials, permanent or otherwise, are in keeping with the character of the setting and its many and varied uses and users. A memorial site to one individual is a very different site to another, and these diverse interests should be respected. Additionally, there is no specified cut-off time for when grieving should end, and each individual case should be considered on its individual merits.

Above all, openspace should remain a place for all to enjoy, as well as a place of significance for those wishing to remember occasions and loved ones.

This policy recognises the need for a consistent and sensitive approach to the provision of memorial requests and acknowledges that the demands for memorials may be far greater than some sites can accommodate.

This policy allows for memorials outside of the traditional cemetery setting but should not be seen as a replacement. Cemetery memorials are governed by specific regulations and policies, which can be found through this link:

<https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Funerals,-Cremations--Bereavement/Memorials.aspx>

Memorial Policy Statement

Requests for memorials in openspace, countryside or highway settings, whether physical structures or natural features, are welcomed. They should be a feature that conserves or enhances the character of the setting and people's enjoyment of the outdoors as a recreational resource and place of quiet enjoyment.

There may be exceptions to this for reasons of road safety or if the memorial interferes with highway maintenance or causes a distraction or obstruction to other road users, such as pedestrians or cyclists. In such cases, sensitive approaches should be made to those who have placed the memorials to explain the situation. Where the person responsible for placing the memorial is unknown and it presents a road safety risk, it may have to be removed; however, as outlined above, each case should be considered on its individual merits. In principle, providing that the memorial has no detrimental effect on road safety and it does not affect the ability to carry out highway maintenance then it may be acceptable.

Policy principles

The following principles will be applied in considering requests and making decisions on memorials and will also set out the principles of the type of memorial to be approved, the location, its safety and future maintenance and replacement.

1. The type of memorial requested must be in keeping with the area that it is to be placed.
2. Requests for additional benches, gates, other structures or trees etc. will only be considered at sites where these additional items can be accommodated reasonably, it is safe to do so and where the Council would seek to increase the existing numbers in any event.
3. The location will be chosen to minimise future maintenance and vandalism.
4. The full cost of a new memorial together with installation and administration will be borne in full by the applicant, where a refurbishment is agreed then the full cost of the refurbishment will be borne by the applicant.
5. The applicant can provide the memorial plaque to a pre agreed design, size and text, or have their memorial/donation reflected in a commemoration book at our visitor centres.
6. The applicant will have no claim of ownership to the item and will not be permitted to make any changes to the item after installation. Neither will they be allowed to place any additional mementoes or memorials at the site whether temporary nor permanent, to include the leaving of flowers (fresh or artificial).
7. The Council will maintain the item in the same way as it does similar items in the vicinity.
8. The Council will not be responsible for replacing the item where, it has reached the end of its natural life, replacement due to normal wear and tear, or for replacement as a result of damage whether accidental or wilful.
9. The Council will set standards in respect of specific items and requests will be considered in line with these standards. (E.g. construction materials used for benches and gates, wildflower seed mix composition, maintenance costs and durability, size, dimensions, colour etc.)

10. Occasionally a unique rather than standard item may be requested as a memorial. In these circumstances, details of the construction, materials and specifications will need to be submitted to the Council for consideration as part of the approval process.

11. Applicants who have approval will be asked to enter into an agreement with the Council setting out the terms and conditions for the memorial. Where an applicant is unwilling to agree to the terms and conditions then their request will be refused.

12. The releasing of balloons and lanterns are prohibited due to the potential risks to the countryside of litter, fire, animal welfare and wildlife.

13. The Council reserves the right to refuse an application.

Other Information

Examples of appropriate memorials could include:

- Planting an un-marked tree
- Planting a hedge or small orchard
- Contributing to a woodland planting
- Benches
- Kissing Gate or small bridges
- Installing bird or bat boxes
- Conservation of a historic feature
- Wildflower planting
- Sponsoring an event

Legacy donation

Alternatively, you may just prefer to give a donation to Flintshire County Council to help maintain and enhance the landscape that people use and enjoy.

Examples of donations could include:

- Restoring a section of stone wall.
- Improving eroded path
- Restoring a wildlife feature

Flintshire County Council can provide advice on appropriate memorials and locations. Contact – Countryside Sites Team Leader on 07775684318. Or Streetscene on 01352 701234

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ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 7 February 2023
Report Subject	Dwr Cymru Welsh Water draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024 - Public Consultation Launch
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) have published a draft Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) for public consultation and have asked the Council as a key stakeholder to submit any views on the draft plan. WRMPs are statutory documents that all water companies must produce at least once every five years, and which play a crucial role in securing the public water supply for the region. Water resources planning is about trying to ensure there is enough water supplied to homes and businesses while protecting the natural environment. The previous plan was dated 2019 and is now being reviewed.

As part of this process, DCWW need to understand how much water they are able to take from rivers, reservoirs and boreholes and supply to customers, not only in 'normal years' when good supplies of rainfall are expected across the supply areas, but also in periods of drought. Within the WRMP, DCWW forecast water resource availability into the future (up to 25 years from the base date of the plan), which takes account of environmental factors and climate change that reduce the amount of water that can be sustainably taken from the various water sources. Given the recent issues with drought experienced in Wales in 2022, and also building in assumptions about climate change in terms of warmer summers and dryer winters, the key theme for this plan is drought resilience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members note the content of this report and the main outcome of the draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024, that shows no supply resilience issues for the Alwen Dee zone that Flintshire is part of.
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2	That Members support the content of paragraph 1.10 of this report and give the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) delegated authority to prepare a final response and agree this with the Chair of this committee, prior to responding to the consultation by the due date.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	Explaining the draft Water Resource Management Plan 2024
1.01	DCWW need to balance how much they are able to supply against the current and future demand for water using the best data available. This is a key component of the draft WRMP in terms of the forecasts of demand that have been made across 23 Water Resource Planning Zones that DCWW use to subdivide their operating area within Wales. Flintshire is within the Alwen Dee zone which also covers parts of Wrexham and South Denbighshire.
1.02	Where the supply-demand balance flags a potential shortfall, to resolve it DCWW use the WRMP to identify options that either reduce demand or increase supplies. However, the decision on which solution is best should look at wider objectives such as maintaining good drinking water quality, meeting Government policy direction or customer's wider preferences such as environmental impact. The investment required is then fed through into DCWW's company business plan to seek the necessary funding.
1.03	<p>The approaches DCWW consider as being key to the successful delivery of the Plan are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To comply with relevant legislation, notably the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and align with Welsh Government's "Water Strategy for Wales 2015". • To deliver a Best Value Plan that doesn't just consider least cost solutions, but which looks to provide wider benefit to customers, society and the environment. • To embed the principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) within our Plan. • To ensure that the views of our customers and stakeholders are properly considered, particularly on service levels and the cost of the Plan. • To ensure our decision making considers all available options to reduce demand and/or increase supply to achieve an environmentally sustainable and secure supply of water. • To prioritise demand management over supply side options where the wider benefits of doing so provide a Best Value solution. As part of this, we are proposing a further 10% reduction in leakage rates during the 2025-2030 period. • To improve the resilience of our supply systems to pressures such as drought and climate change. We must deliver a plan that provides

	<p>resilience to a 1 in 200-year drought event and will set out our plans for improving our resilience to a 1 in 500-year drought event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the Plan is compliant with all statutory requirements and to carry the required environmental assessments of the Plan. • To ensure there is alignment between the Water Resource West Regional Plan and our company water resource management plan as we develop these plans in parallel. • To investigate the opportunities for trading water resources with 3rd parties where this is to the benefit of our customers and not to the detriment of the environment.
1.04	<p>Over the last 25 years, the quantity of water supplied to its customers by DCWW has reduced from 1000 million litres per day (MI/d) to 850 MI/d. DCWW estimate that half of this reduction is due to leakage reduction with the rest accounted for by reduced demand from Industry and greater customer awareness of the value of their water supply and subsequent reductions in their usage. Whilst Wales has significant average annual rainfall and therefore there shouldn't be a resource issue in Wales, DCWW use WRMPs to constantly review the future supply position in order to be able to respond to issues that may arise and target investment to find solutions.</p>
1.05	<p>Each WRMP has a 5 year timeframe and overlaps with the previous one. They are also produced on the basis of current drivers and the draft 2024 plan focusses on drought resilience and adapting to the challenges of climate change. This focus has also been influenced by the drought experienced in parts of Wales in 2022 and the ways in which DCWW will deal with such a scenario in future, in terms of restrictions it may have to put in place. These include the potential need to impose supply restrictions through Emergency Drought Orders (water rationing via standpipes/rota cuts) as well as Temporary Use Bans (formerly hosepipe bans). These are extreme measures that DCWW project on the basis of the probability of such an event occurring once in every 200 years (or a 0.5% probability frequency). The aim of the draft 2024 WRMP is to improve drought resilience and surety of supply such that such extreme events and measures would be reduced to a 1 in 500 year probability of occurrence, or 0.2% probability.</p>
1.06	<p>The diagrams below illustrates the DCWW operational area as well as the 23 Water Resource Planning Zones that they use to subdivide their area, and form the basis of their assessment of resilience via their long term demand forecasting. Flintshire lies within the most north easterly zone which is the Alwen Dee zone.</p> <p>DCWW Operational Area and Planning Zones:</p>

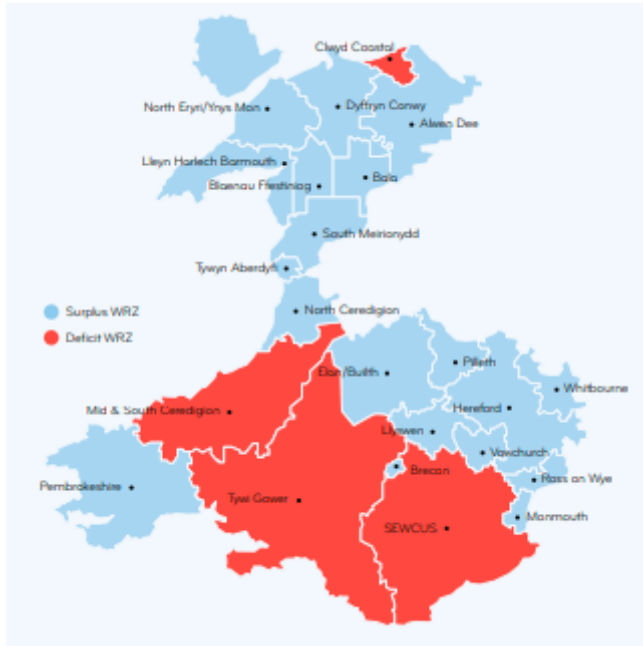


1.07

Each WRMP forecasts demand 25 years ahead based on best available evidence, and calculates the overall supply-demand balance for each of the 23 water resource zones. From this assessment, the draft WRMP 2024 identifies that 4 zones are not resilient (to drought) based on the 1 in 200 year drought resilience probability scenario. The 4 zones are:

- Tywi Gower zone (16MI/d deficit)
- Mid & South Ceredigion zone (1.1 MI/d deficit)
- Clwyd Coastal Zone (0.4 MI/d deficit)
- South-East Wales Conjunctive Use zone (SEWCUS) (45MI/d deficit)

The diagram below shows the location of these zones in deficit:



1.08

Clearly the Clwyd Coast zone is in close proximity to the Alwen Dee zone that Flintshire is part of but there are no supply resilience concerns with this zone, and the Clwyd Coastal zone has a marginal supply/demand deficit, where the draft WRMP identifies specific design work for network reinforcement as part of the long term planning to mitigate this risk. The

	<p>other deficit zones are all in South Wales and also have specific proposals or options that will be considered that also include network strengthening, increased abstraction, increased capacity at treatment works, and raising reservoir levels.</p>
1.09	<p>As part of the WRMP's general drive to improved resilience and demand management across the whole DCWW operating area, there are two key general measures that DCWW will continue to promote through its plan. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leakage reduction • Water efficiency <p>The first of these is for DCWW to address as part of improving the maintenance of their infrastructure and they have set targets to reduce leakage in their system by 15% between 2020-2025, with a further 10% reduction planned between 2025-2030. The second element of water efficiency relies on customers changing their usage patterns and reducing daily consumption, where the average usage is currently around 130 litres per person per day (l/p/d) and the aim is to reduce this down to 110 l/p/d. DCWW will seek to encourage a greater take-up of water metering to assist with these measures. The two measures are linked and the plan refers to a 'social contract' whereby DCWW will do their part in terms of reducing leakage which in turn will have a positive effect on consumer behaviour.</p>
1.10	<p>From the Council's perspective, the indication for the Alwen Dee zone is that there is expected to be good resilience to drought in the 25 years from the base date of this plan, ensuring a consistency of water supply for both Industry and domestic consumption. In relation to this point, it is recommended that Members agree that officers respond to the consultation by the deadline of 22nd February 2023 offering general support for the draft WRMP and the specific outcome for the Alwen Dee Water Management Zone. In addition, Members are asked to endorse the following additional points to be made as part of the response, which will then result in DCWW responding specifically to the Council's representation. These further points focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek clarification that the growth within the now adopted LDP has been factored into the demand forecasting for the Alwen Dee water management zone; • Fully support the wider resilience measures relating to improvement of leakage and greater emphasis on customer awareness of the need to use water more efficiently; • Make the related point that a reduction in waste water going to waste water treatment works has the potential to assist with the significant issue of improving the treatment of phosphates in waste water, and reducing levels discharged into SAC protected rivers; • Encourage DCWW to make the links from the draft WRMP to the need to improve the phosphate removal technology at waste water treatment works as part of their future capital programme;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek a commitment to more regular direct liaison between the Council and DCWW representatives on common issues such as demand planning and phosphates mitigation.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	There are no identifiable resource implications from the need to provide a response to this consultation other than modest officer time.
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3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
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3.01	<p>Given this is a report produced by DCWW for consultation, they have produced a series of assessments alongside the draft plan that comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Environmental Assessment • Habitat Regulations Assessment • Water Framework Directive Assessment • Natural Capital Assessment <p>These reports accompany the consultation document on DCWW's website (see link in accessible background documents section).</p>
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
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4.01	This is an opportunity for the Council to respond to the DCWW consultation as a key stakeholder. The suggested response is as set out in para 1.10 of this report.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	None
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	DCWW Water Resource Management Plan consultation web page
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
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7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Andy Roberts, Service Manager Strategy Telephone: 01352 703211 E-mail: andy.roberts@flintshire.gov.uk</p>
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8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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	These are provided corporately on the Infonet (link) and maintained by the Executive Office
	<p>Water Resource Resilience: This is a measure of the ability of DCWW to meet demand during a specified severity of drought.</p> <p>Supply-Demand balance – This is the relationship between the amount of supply from all sources available at any given time, related to the demand for water that exists at that time. Where demand exceeds supply, then there is a supply deficit.</p>

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