

Public Document Pack

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To: Cllr Alasdair Ibbotson (Chair)

Councillors: Gillian Brockley, Steve Copple, Mared Eastwood, Chrissy Gee,
Ian Hodge, Roz Mansell, Allan Marshall, Carolyn Preece, Dan Rose,
Jason Shallcross and Sam Swash

13 March 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF REMOTE MEETING
CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 19TH MARCH, 2024 at 10.00 AM

Yours faithfully

Steven Goodrum
Democratic Services Manager

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

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

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 MINUTES (Pages 3 - 6)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024.

4 CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR EXTREME HEAT

Purpose: To discuss contingency planning for extreme heat with North Wales Councils' Regional Emergency Planning Service.

5 AUDIT WALES ASSURANCE & RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT - CARBON REDUCTION PLAN (Pages 7 - 28)

Purpose: To acknowledge the outcome of the Audit Wales report and support action being taken to address its recommendation.

6 COMMERCIAL CARBON OFFSETS REPORT (Pages 29 - 40)

Purpose: To appraise the Committee on the purpose and use of commercial carbon offsetting, and recommend that only when all reduction opportunities have been exhausted should this be considered.

7 INQUIRIES UPDATE

Purpose: To provide an update on the Committee Flood and Pensions Inquiries and discuss next steps.

8 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME ITEMS AND PURPOSES (Pages 41 - 48)

Purpose: To populate the Forward Work Programme for the Climate Change Committee.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE **17 JANUARY 2024**

Minutes of the Climate Change Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a remote meeting on Wednesday, 17 January 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson (Chair)

Councillors: Gillian Brockley, Steve Copple, Mared Eastwood, Chrissy Gee, Ian Hodge, Roz Mansell, Allan Marshall, Carolyn Preece, Dan Rose, Jason Shallcross and Sam Swash

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Dave Healey (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Programme Manager for Climate Change and Carbon Reduction, Climate Change Project Officer, Climate Change Officer, and Assistant Biodiversity Officer

IN ATTENDANCE: Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

37. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2023 were approved, as moved and seconded by Councillors Dan Rose and Mared Eastwood.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

38. LAND USE REVIEW FOR BIODIVERSITY, CARBON STORAGE, AND FLOOD MITIGATION

The Chair introduced the item to receive a presentation on the work that is being carried out to assess the feasibility of schemes within the Council's land assets for resisting flood and drought while enhancing biodiversity and increasing carbon storage.

The Programme Manager for Climate Change advised that Molly Salter, Climate Change Officer, and Sophie Roberts, Biodiversity Officer, would give a joint presentation which covered the following main points:

- background
- project overview
- importance of the project
- climate emergency
- nature emergency
- project aims and objectives

- methodology
- ecological resilience
- carbon sequestration
- climate risk and adaptation
- national and regional policies
- Council policies
- a joined-up approach

Officers responded to the questions and comments raised by Councillor Dan Rose regarding data on available land, buffer zones, Flintshire County Council owned land, wildflower, biodiversity, woodland and meadowland. Officers also responded to the comments and questions raised by Councillor Allan Marshall around the B-line mapping system and hedge cutting.

Councillor Dave Healey, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy, raised questions around biodiversity solutions for stemming the flow of the River Alyn upstream. Officers responded to the points raised by Councillor Healey and explained that work was ongoing in conjunction with the flooding management team on the feasibility of sites and AONB. The Programme Climate Change Officer also responded to the comments raised by Councillor Healey concerning the Moel Famau project, and funding for projects to advance further work.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be received.

39. CARBON EMISSIONS OF FACTORY FARMING IN FLINTSHIRE

The Climate Change Project Officer presented a report on carbon emissions associated with farming, and the role of the Council in influencing carbon positive agricultural practices. He provided background information and reported on the main points as detailed in the report.

The Climate Change Programme Manager responded to a question from Councillor Dan Rose concerning contracts and tenant farmers and explained that there were different types of contracts and that there was the opportunity to update the contract terms to support objectives when due for renewal.

The Climate Change Project Officer responded to the question from Councillor Eastwood concerning the percentage of tenant farmers in relation to private land farming, and explained information wasn't available online regarding the location of private farms and that the National Farmers Union Wales may be able to provide further information. Councillor Eastwood proposed that the second recommendation in the report be amended to include the Farmers Union of Wales (FUW). Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson seconded the proposal and when put to the vote this was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That engagement with tenant farmers on Flintshire County Council land to understand their farming practices and activities to address climate change be supported; and .
- (b) That engagement with the National Farmers Union (NFU), the Farmers Union of Wales (FUW), and known companies, and private farmers, to understand how we can engage and promote best practice across the County be supported

40. UPDATE ON INQUIRIES

The Chair introduced the item to receive an update on the Committee Flood and Pensions Inquiries and discuss the next steps.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Democratic Services Manager provided the dates which were currently available to accommodate hearings to address the Inquiries. The Chair proposed that in consultation with the Democratic Services Manager, that sessions be scheduled from 12–16 February 2024 and this was agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

41. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The current Forward Work Programme was appended to the agenda for consideration. The Chair invited Members to suggest any further items they wished to be included on the Programme by email to the Chair or Programme Manager for Climate Change.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be adopted.

42. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

None.

(The meeting started at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 11.03 a.m.)

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Chair

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CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 19 th March 2024
Report Subject	Audit Wales Assurance & Risk Assessment review – Carbon reduction plans
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. This strategy sets the commitment, ambition, actions and milestone targets to reach our net zero carbon goal.

In July 2022, Audit Wales issued a report that called for stronger public sector leadership on reducing carbon emissions in Wales. Following this, they have carried out individual audits of each Council's carbon commitment and action against the findings of their public sector wide report.

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of the Assurance and Risk Assessment review and action that has been taken to date to address the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To consider the outcome of the Audit Wales report and support action being taken to address its recommendation.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REPORT
1.01	<p>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 develop a Climate Change Strategy which would set key aims and actions for creating a net zero carbon Council by 2030.</p> <p>The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan were adopted by Council in February 2022. This Strategy sets the commitment, ambition, actions, and milestone targets to reach our net zero carbon goal.</p> <p>In July 2022, the Auditor General published a report titled ‘Public Sector readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030’, which looked at decarbonisation actions in 48 public bodies, including all councils.</p> <p>This report found uncertainty that the collective ambition for a net zero public sector by 2030 will be met. The work identified significant, common barriers to progress that public bodies must collectively address to meet the collective ambition.</p> <p>They found that while public bodies are demonstrating commitment to carbon reduction, they must now significantly ramp up their activities, increase collaboration and place decarbonisation at the heart of their day-to-day operations and decisions.</p> <p>In the report, the Auditor General makes the following 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 you need;• know your skills gaps and increase your capacity; and• improve data quality and monitoring to support your decision making. <p>Following this, Audit Wales carried out individual audits of each Council’s carbon commitment and action against the findings of their public sector wide report. The evidence base for this work included conversations with officers and reviewing relevant documents. It is not clear who was interviewed as part of this audit - the Climate Change team were not interviewed or aware of the audit taking place.</p>
1.02	<p>The Audit Wales report (Appendix 1) found that:</p> <p><i>“The Council has a clear vision and strategic support for its approach to decarbonisation and net zero by 2030, articulated in its decarbonisation plan and its corporate priorities and recognises the challenges between its current emissions and achieving net zero by 2030 but developing better data on the cost and carbon impacts of its interventions would support it in the prioritisation of its resources.”</i></p>

	<p><i>“The Council has a vision for decarbonisation and has stated its ambition of becoming a net zero Council by 2030 within its latest Climate Change Strategy (CCS), which was approved by Cabinet in February 2022. Whilst the CCS sets out the Council’s journey towards net zero, the Council have recognised that these steps on their own will still not be enough to achieve net zero by 2030 and that advances in technology and a significant increase in sequestration will be important areas if the gap is to be bridged. There are clear links between the CCS and two of the Council’s Well Being Objectives and the Sustainable Development principle is being used to support the delivery of the CCS has been defined within the CCS accompanying Integrated Impact Assessment.</i></p> <p>The full report can be seen in Appendix 1.</p>
1.10	<p>The report details the following recommendation: <i>“In order to meet its net zero ambition, the Council needs to fully cost its action plan and ensure that it is aligned with its Medium-Term Financial Strategy. If the Council does not develop more detailed business plans which will estimate the investment required, it is unlikely to be able to achieve its goal of becoming net zero carbon by 2030.”</i></p>
1.11	<p>In terms of ensuring investment is committed within the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy, within the Capital Programme 2024-25 to 2026-27, a number of schemes are included which address our carbon commitments. Within proposed allocations, the Private Sector Housing Renewal, School building works and corporate property works commitments all include elements of decarbonisation where assets within properties are not automatically changed like for like but include consideration of low carbon alternatives as part of an ongoing maintenance regime.</p> <p>Within the proposed investment schemes are three projects – Joint Archive Facility, Croes Atti Residential Care Home, and Re:Fit framework. These schemes address the Council’s carbon commitments.</p> <p>The joint archive facility and Croes Atti care home have been designed to be net zero carbon in operation (NZCio). This is in line with our climate change strategy’s action to ‘Design and refurbish buildings for NZCio’.</p> <p>The Re:Fit framework is a national procurement framework specifically for energy efficiency and renewable energy works across Public Sector buildings and land assets where the Council has committed £1.5 million investment over 2024-25 and 2025-26. This framework will accelerate the decarbonisation of our building assets while realising energy and cost savings from the energy works.</p> <p>Within the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25, £2.684m has been incorporated within Streetscene and Transportation acknowledging the anticipated costs around fleet including the transition to Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles.</p> <p>These projects within the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme demonstrate that the Council is forecasting and developing businesses plans for investment towards its net zero goals.</p>

1.12

In terms of the requirement for the Council to cost its action plan, Appendix 2 details some of the key actions within the Climate Change Strategy, along with high level financial implications and associated carbon savings. The 'Buildings' and 'Mobility and Transport' themes cover the Council's Scope 1 and 2 emissions (with some Scope 3). Currently, industry best practice has focussed on development of tools to effectively cost Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions.

Within the Buildings theme of the CCS, there is a projected target of a 60% reduction in emissions equating to 6,448tCO₂e by 2030. Emissions within this theme come from the energy used within our building assets – electricity, heating, and water. The main actions within this theme to contribute to this reduction are CCBu2 (reviewing and rationalising building assets), CCBu3 (improving energy efficiency within existing Council buildings) and CCBu5 (designing and refurbishing buildings for NZCio).

As we do not have a clear and up-to-date picture of our building assets and the measures that can still be taken to decarbonise them, we have had to utilise high-level best practice tools that rely on assumptions around our building's condition.

In order to achieve this reduction, there is an estimated capital cost in excess of £66million. This was calculated using best practice assumptions: a 20-30% increase to capital works programmes to design and build to NZCio standard and the utilisation of a high-level costing tool developed by Pembrokeshire County Council.

Welsh Government have commissioned AECOM Building condition and energy surveys which will allow us to better understand the current condition of school buildings and the works that can still be undertaken to decarbonise them. This information will inform costing of works needed to further decarbonise these assets.

The Council has also committed £1.5million over 2023-25 as part of RE:fit 4 to provide energy efficiency and renewable energy works across its assets. This will realise carbon savings around 892tCO₂e with a seven-year payback.

The Council has been investing in energy efficiency works for a number of years reducing carbon emissions from energy use by up to 60% based on a 2009 baseline. Many of these works have been financed through SALIX interest free loans and the recycling fund and Prudential borrowing.

These works have been developed through robust business cases on an invest to save where energy efficiency and renewable energy investment returns cost savings and income streams.

Further potential options include Power Purchase Agreements for renewable energy installations whereby a business agrees to purchase electricity directly from an energy generator instead of purchasing electricity from the grid. With the already committed works there is

	<p>confidence that a better understanding of financial commitment to decarbonise this theme can be determined.</p>
<p>1.13</p>	<p>Within the Mobility and Transport theme of the CCS, there is a projected target of 80% reduction in emissions equating to 5,372tCO₂e by 2030. Emissions in this theme come from fleet travel, business travel and employee commuting. The main actions within this theme centre around the transition of our fleet to ULEV, investing in EV charging infrastructure both publicly and corporately to facilitate this transition, and the development of a salary sacrifice scheme for employees for a ULEV vehicle.</p> <p>Financial costings within this theme are difficult to determine currently. The first phase of public EV charging infrastructure was rolled out in 2023 at a cost of £155k. This was funded by the On Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS). £42k has been secured from WG for a feasibility study for Phase 2 which will advise on further potential investment.</p> <p>The Council's fleet vehicles cannot transition to alternative fuels without a clear vision of what infrastructure solutions may be needed to ensure front line operations are not adversely impacted. Costs exist with the provision and installation of EV charging infrastructure at corporate locations to facilitate this transition with the associated drawbacks such as the estimated cost of upgrading the grid capacity at Alltami depot to accommodate charging facilities.</p> <p>A feasibility study has been commissioned on the corporate estate to determine next steps with future service and aspirations including ULEV transition.</p> <p>Costs associated with the transition of Council fleet vehicles to ULEV is also unclear due to market fluctuations. The Council's current fleet model will be addressed in an Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) plan and this will be informed by the feasibility study as mentioned above.</p> <p>With the already committed works there is confidence that a better understanding of financial commitment to decarbonise this theme can be determined.</p>
<p>1.14</p>	<p>It should be noted that every public sector body is experiencing the same difficulty with costing climate actions. As was detailed within our own Climate Change Strategy, this is due to a number of factors: the volatile financial climate, the changing energy prices, lack of ability or understanding to apply financials to non-quantitative factors (such as behaviour change), and an ever evolving and developing industry where we do not currently have all of the answers to mitigate our climate impacts.</p> <p>The Council continues to network within the Public, Private and Third sectors to keep abreast of good practice and developments both in terms of methodologies and technologies.</p>

	<p>The Council has a demonstrable track record of taking innovative action to achieve its long-term goals for example, investment in large scale renewables, working with Universities to pilot research programmes, and collaborating with other public sector bodies to achieve shared outcomes. The Council will continue to do this in achieving its ambitious net zero goals.</p>
1.14	<p>While we have made some progress in understanding the carbon savings and financial costings of key actions within the Strategy, there is still a way to go with refining these figures.</p> <p>Ascertaining baselines for the Council’s building assets will provide valuable insight into further feasible works that can be completed to decarbonise these assets, and the scheduled feasibility studies for EV charging infrastructure and the corporate estate will also provide detail on the direction the Council can take and what the financial implications of these will be.</p>
1.15	<p>In the June 2023 WLGA pan-Wales Climate Change Officers’ Group meeting, Local Partnerships (LP) presented a tool ‘Scenario Planning for Net Zero’.</p> <p>This tool seeks to aid local authorities in determining costs associated with decarbonising Scope 1 and 2 emissions. This tool was developed within public sector England and Cardiff Council. The tool plots several scenarios including specific decarbonisation interventions and a BAU pathway. The feedback from the group was that this tool would be very beneficial to Local Authorities in assisting with the costing of their climate action plans in line with Audit Wales’ recommendations. WLGA are developing a business case to request assistance from WG in the procurement of this tool for the use of Welsh Local Authorities. This is a tool that the Council will look to utilise to further cost its Climate Action Plan.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Capital investment is required to realise these actions, however the Council has a history of both invest to save, and utilising external funding streams to realise the aims around decarbonisation. The Council continues to ensure it is appraised with available external funding opportunities, and adopts collaborative working to reduce costs where possible.</p> <p>Revenue resource will also be required to manage and implement some of these interventions. Compared to neighbouring authorities, the Council has limited dedicated resource for the programme, and officers’ ability to lead on projects alongside their usual roles may be unsustainable and risk the progress of programme delivery.</p> <p>Business cases will continue to be developed for projects on an as and when basis.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT	
3.01	Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact	
	Long-term	<p>Positive: Decarbonisation of the Council's activities and services will require long term planning and a long term vision to ensure systems and services are fit for purpose as the climate changes as well as reducing the impact of harmful climate change through mitigation.</p> <p>Decarbonisation activities such as planting trees and developing renewable energy will have long lasting impacts over tens to hundreds of years. These activities also contribute to the climate change targets set by Welsh Government particularly Wales generating 70% of its electricity demand from renewable energy by 2030 and becoming a net zero carbon nation by 2050.</p>
	Prevention	<p>Positive: In order to avoid the harmful effects of climate change it is necessary for the Council to reduce its carbon emissions and increase the amount of carbon sequestered in its land assets. Carbon emissions caused by human activities are the main cause of climate change.</p> <p>Mitigating climate change will help to reduce impacts such as extreme weather causing flooding / extreme heat, loss of wildlife and habitats, increased pests and diseases, etc.</p> <p>Adapting to the impacts of climate change now will improve sustainability of our communities as the climate changes.</p>
	Integration	<p>Positive: Becoming net zero carbon integrates with the following priorities under the Council Plan; Green Council, Ambitious Council and Supportive Council. It integrates with the public service board objectives in the Environment priority of the Wellbeing Plan as well as the Smart Access to Energy project in the North Wales Growth Deal. It also integrates with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Welsh Government's decarbonisation of the public sector agenda.</p>
	Collaboration	<p>Positive: The climate change programme offers multiple opportunities to work collaboratively both internally and externally – and this collaboration will determine the success of the programme.</p>

	<p>Collaboration with the following groups is needed to ensure decarbonisation is integrated into everything that the Council and the wider region does and plans for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welsh Government - Other public sector organisations such as local authorities, NRW, health boards, universities. - Private sector - Regional groups such as the North Wales Economic Ambition Board - Local Town and County Councillors - the local communities
Involvement	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.
3.02	Not anticipated to be any negative anti-poverty, equalities or environmental impacts of the scheme.	
3.03	<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 – Audit Wales Assurance & Risk Assessment Review</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Cost and carbon estimates for key climate change strategy actions</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Audit Wales report – 'Public sector readiness for net zero carbon by 2030'</p> <p>https://www.audit.wales/publication/public-sector-readiness-net-zero-carbon-2030</p>

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

BAU – Business As Usual

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.

CCS – Climate Change Strategy

CO₂ – Carbon dioxide

Decarbonisation - Reducing and ultimately eliminating carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions.

EV – Electric Vehicle

IEA – International Energy Agency

LP – Local Partnerships

NZC – Net Zero Carbon – balancing carbon emissions with carbon removal or eliminating carbon emissions altogether.

NZCio – Net Zero Carbon in operation

ORCS – On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme provided by Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles (OZEV)

RE:fit 4 – National procurement framework managed by Local Partnerships to facilitate energy efficiency and renewable energy works within Public Sector assets

Scope 1 – Greenhouse gas emissions that the organisation makes directly – for example burning fossil fuels for heating for buildings and petrol/diesel vehicles

Scope 2 – Greenhouse gas emissions that the organisation makes indirectly – for example electricity usage

Scope 3 – Greenhouse gas emissions that are the result of activities from assets not owned or controlled by the organisation, but that the organisation indirectly affects in its value chain

tCO₂e – Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent

ULEV – Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles

WG – Welsh Government

WLGA – Welsh Local Government Association

Assurance and Risk Assessment Review – Flintshire County Council

Audit year: 2021-22

Date issued: July 2023

Document reference: 3553A2022

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

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What we reviewed and why

- 1 We undertook this project to identify the level of audit assurance and/or where further audit work may be required in future years in relation to risks to the Council putting in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources. This project also helped us to assess the extent to which the Council is applying the sustainable development principle in taking steps to meet its well-being objectives.
- 2 This report summarises our findings in the areas where we have undertaken more detailed Assurance and Risk Assessment work. We will also produce an Annual Audit Summary in Spring 2023 that will summarise all of our audit work undertaken since our last Annual Audit Summary in January 2022.
- 3 We focused in particular on the following areas at the Council:
 - Implications of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 including self-assessment arrangements
 - Carbon reduction plans
- 4 Our evidence base for this work included conversations with officers and reviewing relevant documents.
- 5 The Assurance and Risk Assessment project has been ongoing throughout the year. We held a workshop with the Council officers in February 2023 at which we shared emerging findings in relation to some aspects of this work. We also used the workshop to gather the perspectives of senior managers on the key audit risks in relation to the Council and to inform our forward planning.

Implications of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

The Council is putting in place arrangements to assure itself that it is meeting the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

- 6 We reviewed the arrangements the Council is putting in place to respond to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (the 2021 Act).
- 7 The 2021 Act requires councils to keep performance under review and consult and report on performance through a self-assessment. Councils must publish a self-assessment of their performance for each financial year. During 2021-22 the Council has taken forward actions to implement the self-assessment duties. The Council published its first self-assessment report in November 2022. This was following consideration of the draft report by Council, scrutiny committee workshops and Governance and Audit Committee (GAC).
- 8 The Council plans to discharge its consultation duty under the 2021 Act through existing mechanisms of engagement with the trade unions, businesses in the local area, residents and Council staff.
- 9 The Council has updated the GAC's Terms of Reference to reflect the 2021 Act. The GAC's membership is in accordance with the 2021 Act, with one third of the committee being lay persons. Recruitment of the lay persons was completed on time and observation by Audit Wales staff of Flintshire GAC meetings during 2022 indicates that the new arrangements appear to be working satisfactorily and meetings are consistently well chaired. The lay persons, along with elected councillors who are GAC members, have received introductory training on their role.

Carbon reduction plans

Context

- 10 In July 2022, the Auditor General published Public Sector readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030¹, which looked at decarbonisation actions in 48 public bodies, including all councils. This report found uncertainty that the collective ambition for a net zero public sector by 2030 will be met. Our work identified significant, common barriers to progress that public bodies must collectively address to meet the collective ambition. We found that while public bodies are demonstrating commitment to carbon reduction, they must now significantly ramp up their activities, increase collaboration and place decarbonisation at the heart of their day-to-day operations and decisions.
- 11 In the report, the Auditor General makes the following five calls for action from public bodies:
- 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 you need;
 - know your skills gaps and increase your capacity; and
 - improve data quality and monitoring to support your decision making.
- 12 The following paragraphs set out the findings of our local audit work on the Council's decarbonisation action plan. These findings sit within the wider context of the Auditor General's July 2022 report. That report calls for increased pace and stronger leadership across Wales in reducing carbon emissions.

¹ Audit Wales, [Uncertainty that the ambition for a net zero public sector will be met, according to Auditor General, July 2022.](#)

The Council has a clear vision and strategic support for its approach to decarbonisation and net zero by 2030, articulated in its decarbonisation plan and its corporate priorities and recognises the challenges between its current emissions and achieving net zero by 2030 but developing better data on the cost and carbon impacts of its interventions would support it in the prioritisation of its resources.

- 13 The Council has a vision for decarbonisation and has stated its ambition of becoming a net zero Council by 2030 within its latest Climate Change Strategy (CCS), which was approved by Cabinet in February 2022. Whilst the CCS sets out the Council's journey towards net zero, the Council have recognised that these steps on their own will still not be enough to achieve net zero by 2030 and that advances in technology and a significant increase in sequestration will be important areas if the gap is to be bridged. There are clear links between the CCS and two of the Council's Well Being Objectives and the Sustainable Development principle is being used to support the delivery of the CCS has been defined within the CCS accompanying Integrated Impact Assessment.
- 14 The Council was part of Welsh Government's pilot for the Net Zero data collection and therefore they have a well-developed understanding of their Carbon footprint and have confidence in their baseline data. In understanding their footprint, the Council have also been able to articulate the gap between current emission and net zero. The Council have told us that they will continuing to improve the methods used to calculate their footprint data. Having robust data has enabled the Council to develop its interventions to address the areas with the greatest emissions.
- 15 The Council has estimated the cost of reaching net zero by 2030, which exceeds £22m and recognised that funding for this has not yet been identified and this represents a barrier to meeting this target.
- 16 The CCS includes a detailed Action Plan for each priority area. Supporting this overarching Action Plan are more detailed action plans. The Council have told us that the full financial and Carbon impact of each of these interventions has not been assessed as the estimates would be impacted by changing externalities meaning that they would quickly become out of date. However, they also confirmed that projects are selected with priority being given to those projects that will have a direct impact on their carbon baseline and in the areas that they consider to have the biggest CO₂ impact such as energy efficiency retrofitting of buildings and transitioning the fleet to become electric. Having a comprehensive understanding of the carbon and cost impacts for each of the projects/interventions within the detailed action plans would improve the Council's decision making around how its prioritises its interventions.
- 17 The Council have established a cross political Programme Board (now Climate Change Committee) to provide governance around its climate change agenda and

it has clearly articulated how it proposes to provide governance and to monitor progress on its journey towards net zero in its CCS, with scrutiny provided by progress reports to the Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee. The CCS includes a number of specific targets and milestones for the journey to achieving net zero. However, the Council recognises that there is more work to do to ensure that reporting and monitoring is integrated in the Council's performance management process. The Council has also told us that it proposes to use its public facing Climate Change webpages for future public reporting on its annual progress.

- 18 The Council have reported that its CCS has been developed through engagement with Members, Officers, through workshops and training, The Council also ran a public engagement period through October and November 2021 and also engaged with primary and secondary schools. The Council have told us that the feedback from this engagement was further developed in internal workshops with each of the portfolio areas across the Council's services and was used to further develop the Strategy.
- 19 The Council is engaged in several strategic partnerships which will support its ambition towards net zero, such as the development of Parc Adfer waste to energy facility. The Council have also told us that it continues to work closely with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, the Joint Public Service Board and others in delivering its ambitions around decarbonisation, however also recognised that in particular joint projects with PSB partners are challenging due to the different levels of carbon maturity within partner organisations. The Council is also part of the North Wales Decarbonisation Officers group where learning is shared and projects such as, procuring a single climate changing training solution, are being developed.
- 20 The Council have told us that they have invested over £2.5 million over the last ten years in its energy programme. It has also been successful at attracting external funding such as the Welsh Government's Optimised RetroFit2 fund, which will support retro energy efficiency measures to decarbonise its housing stock. However, the Council has also stated that finding the resources to deliver its ambition represents both a short and long-term risk and that significant investment will be required if the Council is to achieve its goal of becoming net zero carbon by 2030. The Council recognises that currently the Climate Change Strategy has not been fully resourced, although work is underway to develop more detailed business plans which will estimate the investment required. Once there is a clearer understanding of the financial investments required for the proposed interventions these should be fully reflected in any future Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Recommendations

Exhibit 1: recommendations

The table below sets out the recommendations that we have identified following this review.

Recommendations	
R1	In order to meet its net zero ambition, the Council needs to fully cost its action plan and ensure that it is aligned with its Medium-Term Financial Strategy. If the Council does not develop more detailed business plans which will estimate the investment required, it is unlikely to be able to achieve its goal of becoming net zero carbon by 2030.



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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

Estimated costings and carbon savings for key Climate Change strategy actions

Buildings theme		Projected reduction based on actions within plan	Balance of tCO2e after actions	Current emissions (2022-23)	Cost
To reduce carbon emissions from Council non-domestic buildings by 60% by 2030		6,448 (60% of 10,747tCO2e baseline)	4,298	7,828	In excess of £66million
Ref	Activity	Timetable	Projected costs (£)	tCO2e savings	
CCBu2	Review and rationalise building assets	Short - Medium	Relocation costs with potential income from disposal	533 from disposal of a large office space such as County Hall	
CCBu3	Improve energy efficiency within existing Council buildings	Short - Medium	Current RE:fit investment of £1.5mill, plus high level calculation £66mill.	6,448 based on 60% of baseline	
CCBu5	Design and refurbish buildings for net zero carbon operation	Short - Medium	Typically adds 20-30% increase in total cost to meet NZCio standard from design stage.	341 based on current new builds Ysgol Mynydd Isa, Ysgol Croes Atti & Croes Atti care home achieving NZCio.	

Mobility & Transport theme		Projected reduction based on actions within plan	Balance of tCO2e after actions	Current tCO2e (2022-23)	Cost
To reduce carbon emissions from fleet travel, business travel and staff commuting by 80% by 2030		5,372 (80% of 6,716tCO2e baseline)	1,343	5,517	In excess of £1million
Ref	Activity	Timetable	Projected costs (£)	tCO2e savings	
CCM2	Continue to implement and develop agile working practices to reduce employee journeys and utilise virtual meetings.	Short - Medium	Potential set up costs for staff salary sacrifice scheme.	120 based on potential of staff interested in salary sacrifice scheme for ULEV and using this vehicle for business travel.	
CCM3	Ensure vehicle charging points are available at key areas across the county	Short – Medium	First phase completed at cost of £155k (fully funded by ORCS grant). WGES report Apr 2021 estimates £333k excluding installation costs for corporate charging facilities. Plus costs to upgrade grid capacity.	Facilitates CCM2, 4, 5 & 6.	
CCM4 – 6	Transition of fleet to electric and alternative low carbon fuels	Medium - Long	Undetermined. ULEV vehicles attract an approx.. 100% premium on base price, for example HGVs attract an approx.. £200k premium on base price each to purchase.	2,475 based on emissions from bunkered fuel and fuel cards.	
CCM9	Promote and launch a managed salary sacrifice scheme for low and ultra-low emission vehicles.	Short – Medium	Potential set up costs for staff salary sacrifice scheme.	520 based on potential of staff interested in salary sacrifice scheme and using this vehicle for employee commuting.	



CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	19 th March 2024
Report Subject	Commercial Carbon Offsets
Cabinet Member	Collective Responsibility
Report Author	Climate Change Project Officer (Climate Change Programme)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council has a target to become Net Zero Carbon by 2030. In order to become net zero carbon, the Council must reduce its emissions from its assets and services, as much as is viable, and any residual emissions must be offset through use of land to absorb and store carbon (usually tree planting). The emission reduction pathway shown in the Council's Climate Change Strategy predicts that approximately 20,000 tCO₂e may still be emitted by the council by 2030.

Commercial carbon offsets allow a country, organisation or individual to pay to have emissions prevented or removed elsewhere that are equal to their own emission outputs (e.g., trees are planted in another location somewhere in the world on behalf of the purchaser). As a result, some organisations claim to be carbon neutral, and future net zero carbon claims will likely require the purchase of offsets that remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere for long periods of time.

Carbon offset projects typically occur in low-income and developing countries and are required to meet particular standards set by various organisations. Offsets can be in the form of tree planting, protection of existing forest, installation of renewable energy and improved cooking methods to name some examples, with many claims of co-benefits such as reduced household air pollution and support for biodiversity.

However, there are a number of issues presented by offsets such as the finances required to compensate for ongoing organisational emissions, a lack of local co-benefits and in some cases a lack of credibility and impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	The Council should not purchase carbon removal offsets while carbon reduction and sequestration opportunities exist, irrespective of the 2030 net zero carbon target.
2	Only when all carbon reduction opportunities have been exhausted, or are not viable, should the Council consider the purchase of removal offsets to become net zero carbon. In such a case, the Council should prioritise offset projects that are local and meet robust standards/backed by UK Government.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REPORT
1.01	<p>Background</p> <p>The Council has a net zero carbon target of 2030. In order to meet this target, the Council is continuing to reduce emissions and investigating opportunities to increase land sequestration.</p> <p>Any Council emissions that remain once land sequestration is taken into account, would require carbon removal offsets in order to achieve net zero carbon. The carbon emission pathway in the Council's Climate Change Strategy (CCS) predicts 20,000 tCO₂e may still be emitted by 2030.</p> <div data-bbox="320 1196 1382 1895"> <p>Flintshire County Council 2018-2030 Emissions</p> <p>Figure 3: Flintshire County Council's projected emissions to 2029/30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Actual data - - - Business as usual — Decarbonisation pathway - - - Net zero pathway </div> <p>Image 1 Council emissions pathway between 2018-2030</p>

1.02	<p>Purpose</p> <p>This report presents information on commercial carbon offsets, such as the standards they should meet, examples of their use, and the benefits and drawbacks.</p>
1.03	<p>A carbon offset is where a country, organisation or individual compensates for the carbon emissions they produce, by paying for carbon emissions elsewhere to be prevented from occurring, or removed from the atmosphere.</p> <p>Offsets are purchased through carbon credits which are a token representing the avoidance or removal of greenhouse gas emissions. One credit typically represents one tonne of carbon dioxide (tCO₂).</p> <p>These credits are created by a project verified by a particular standard which is then sold to another country or organisation who wish to offset the emissions they produce. Depending on the type of offset credit (avoidance or removal), that country or organisation can then claim carbon neutrality or net zero carbon.</p> <p>Many offsetting activities take place in emerging markets or developing countries, whereas buyers of offsets are typically located in higher-income countries. In theory, this should provide additional resources to invest in sustainable development around the world, while also enabling recipients to decarbonise more quickly.</p>
1.04	<p>There are a number of programmes and standards for supporting action, making carbon neutral claims and verifying carbon offsets. These include:</p> <p>United Nations REDD Programme</p> <p>REDD is a climate change mitigation solution developed by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).</p> <p>REDD goes beyond simply deforestation and forest degradation and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.</p> <p>PAS 2060 – Carbon Neutrality Claims</p> <p>The PAS 2060 - Carbon neutrality verification provides a recognised method of substantiating genuine carbon neutral claims made by an organisation. The standard claims to help organisations demonstrate sustainability credentials, help combat climate change and align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).</p> <p>Gold Standard & Verra Verified Carbon Standards– Global Offsets</p> <p>The Gold Standard is a voluntary carbon offset program focused on progressing the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensuring that project’s benefit their neighbouring communities. It was developed under the leadership of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), HELIO International, and SouthSouthNorth, with a focus on offset projects that</p>

	<p>provide lasting social, economic, and environmental benefits (carbonoffsetguide, 2024).</p> <p>Verra’s Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Program is the world’s most widely used greenhouse gas (GHG) crediting program. It drives finance toward activities that reduce and remove emissions, improve livelihoods, and protect nature (Verra, 2022). Projects are subjected to independent auditing by Verra and qualified third parties.</p> <p>Woodland Carbon Code UK</p> <p>The Woodland Carbon Code (WCC) is the quality assurance standard for woodland creation projects in the UK, and generates high integrity, independently verified carbon units. Backed by the Government, the forest industry and carbon market experts, the Code provides woodland carbon units here in the UK.</p> <p>The Woodland Carbon Code offers two types of offsets. The first is the Woodland Carbon Unit (WCU) which is where a tonne of CO₂ is being sequestered in a verified woodland. Organisations can purchase these to only offset their UK-based emissions. The second type of offset is called a Pending Issuance Unit (PIU) which is effectively a ‘promise to deliver’ a Woodland Carbon Unit (WCU) in future, based on predicted sequestration. It is not ‘guaranteed’ and cannot be used to report against UK-based emissions until verified, however, it does allow organisations to plan to compensate future UK-based emissions.</p> <p>The Peatland Code UK</p> <p>The Peatland Code is an example of natural capital financing for restoration. UK peatlands are a significant store of carbon, however, due to historical degradation these habitats are currently net emitters of carbon emissions.</p> <p>The code is a voluntary standard for UK peatland projects wishing to market the resulting reduced emissions from peatland restoration. The scheme is accredited by UKAS, and like the Woodland Carbon Code, is recognised in the UK government’s Environmental Reporting Guidelines and offers Peatland Carbon Units (PCU) and Pending Issuance Units (PIU).</p>
1.05	<p>A carbon credit is a verifiable and purchasable carbon offset which relates to emission avoidance or removal. Credits typically represent one tonne of carbon dioxide.</p>
1.06	<p>Examples of carbon avoidance offsets are:</p> <p>Aldi UK & Ireland</p> <p>Aldi purchases carbon offsets (some examples below) through an organisation called ClimatePartner. These offsets are equivalent to Aldi’s scope 1 and 2 carbon dioxide emissions, meet international standards and allow Aldi to claim Carbon Neutrality.</p>

- 120 MW solar plant in the city of Ahmedabad, India. Produces renewable electricity as well as creating jobs for local people and offers regular training to employees.
- Cookstoves in Nigeria are cleaner and more efficient, producing less smoke.
- Forest Protection in Indonesia protects habitat and promotes ecosystem health through reforestation in degraded areas. Other support with this project includes water systems, solar lighting, libraries and more.

Allstar Business Solutions

- Through its Ecopoint membership programme, users of Allstar cards have their carbon emissions mitigated.
- Allstar have bought from 44 Woodland Carbon Code projects as part of the Ecopoint programme.

Evian

- Carbon neutral in April 2020 certified by the Carbon Trust.
- Evian have been able to achieve this by continuously measuring and reducing carbon emissions at each stage of the bottle's lifecycle.
- The remaining emissions are offset through the work with Livelihood Funds. Livelihood funds mission is to support the effort of agricultural and rural communities to restore the natural ecosystem that are the foundations of their livelihood, food security and income.
- 130 million trees have been planted as a result.

Gold Standard

Gold Standard has a marketplace webpage detailing a number of projects where carbon credits can be purchased. Fees are based on one tonne of carbon dioxide offset. Examples are:

- Improved Cookstoves for Rural Zambia (\$20.00 /tonne): More efficient cookstoves are provided to communities, helping to reduce demand on inefficient fuels as well as improving reducing the impact on air quality.
- 300 MW Solar PV Plant at Bhadla, Rajasthan (\$12.00 /tonne): Large scale solar project displacing demand from the Indian energy grid which is mainly dominated by fossil-fuels.

Woodland Carbon Code UK

- The Woodland Trust acquired 13.8ha of land to expand the current Coedy Foel woodland in Ceredigion and has since sold WCU offsets through the Woodland Carbon Code. The project includes diverse woodland species and associated habitats as well as strengthen hedgerow.
- Woodland Carbon Code Pending Issuance Units (PIUs) cost in the region of £10-20 tCO₂, and Peatland Code PIUs are on average £24 tCO₂.

1.07	<p>Benefits of carbon offsets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects can support low-income communities with jobs and training to manage projects and/or provide them with improved technologies. - Cleaner cookstoves can reduce household air pollution (HAP), reducing risk to respiratory health - Support biodiversity and provide threatened species with habitat through forest planting alongside timber production - UK programmes exist, with the Woodland Carbon Code backed by the UK Government
1.08	<p>Drawbacks of carbon offsets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New offsets required purchasing for any newly generated emissions drawing finance away from emission reduction opportunities. - Projects that produce carbon credits are often located far from the organisation, typically in the global south, therefore co-benefits of projects are not felt locally - Offsets may disincentivise an organisation to further reduce their carbon emissions. - Disease, wildfires and illegal deforestation pose a risk to sequestered carbon for which an organisation has paid credits for. - Projects have been found to overestimate benefits of offsets, such as exaggerating deforestation risk when purchasing offsets to protect forests. This can risk greenwashing. - Auditors hired by project developers and market competition can create a conflict of interest and risk the impact and transparency of offset projects. - Offset projects may utilise the planting of monocultures which have few other co-benefits such as biodiversity, and also increases risks to disease
1.09	<p>The Science-based Targets Initiative's (SBTi) cross-sector pathway states the need for emission reductions of at least 90% by no later 2050 from 2020 levels, and long-term carbon reduction targets should be aligned to this date or sooner.</p> <p>The SBTi Net Zero Standard states that after an organisation has achieved its long-term target, it must use permanent carbon removal and storage to counterbalance the final 10% or more of residual emissions that cannot be eliminated. A company is only considered to have reached net zero carbon when it has achieved its long-term science-based target and neutralized any residual emissions.</p>
1.10	<p>To achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2030, the Council would have to purchase carbon removal offsets to compensate for the carbon emissions that cannot be balanced by sequestration on its own land. This practice would be required each year as the Council will continue to produce some emissions within its operations.</p> <p>Despite the various co-benefits of offsets such as supporting low-income communities in other countries, the council should carefully consider the</p>

	<p>risks (greenwashing, lack of impact and transparency), and use of public funds for carbon offsets and how opportunities to reduce emissions further may be impacted, which themselves may have other direct and local co-benefits.</p> <p>A more ethical approach would be to extend the target year for achieving Net Zero Carbon and continue to reduce the Council's carbon emissions, rather than utilising commercial offsets.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	Financial - When carbon offsets are required after all carbon emission reduction and sequestration opportunities are exhausted. The carbon offsets would need to be paid annually on an ongoing basis for as long as the residual carbon emissions exist.
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3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
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3.01	None
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4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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4.01	<p>The recommendations will ensure that the Council continues to address its responsibilities to reducing carbon emissions at source. Avoiding the use of carbon offsets while carbon reduction opportunities are still available will ensure finances are used more responsibly which reduces the risk of greenwashing accusations, and ensuring co-benefits of further reductions are gained.</p> <p>Risks from Carbon Offsets themselves are present (e.g., effectiveness and permanence). As the offsets market matures, risks will be better known allowing for more informed decision-making.</p>
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4.02	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>Negative: Purchasing carbon offsets to soon means more funding is spent on offsets as well as directing funding away existing carbon reduction measures.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>Positive: Good quality removal offsets will ensure the council meets Net Zero Carbon and no longer contributes to global emissions.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td>Neutral: Offsets will provide no impact.</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	Negative: Purchasing carbon offsets to soon means more funding is spent on offsets as well as directing funding away existing carbon reduction measures.	Prevention	Positive: Good quality removal offsets will ensure the council meets Net Zero Carbon and no longer contributes to global emissions.	Integration	Neutral: Offsets will provide no impact.
Long-term	Negative: Purchasing carbon offsets to soon means more funding is spent on offsets as well as directing funding away existing carbon reduction measures.						
Prevention	Positive: Good quality removal offsets will ensure the council meets Net Zero Carbon and no longer contributes to global emissions.						
Integration	Neutral: Offsets will provide no impact.						

	Collaboration	Neutral: It is unlikely the purchase of carbon removal offsets improves collaboration
	Involvement	Neutral: It is unlikely the purchase of carbon removal offsets improves collaboration
4.03	Well-being Goals Impact	
	Prosperous Wales	Negative: Unnecessary carbon offsets are likely to divert unnecessary spend away from the council and Flintshire
	Resilient Wales	Neutral: There are unlikely to be any direct benefits in Flintshire and Wales as a result of using carbon offsets. However, positive impacts may be felt more generally as climate change is addressed.
	Healthier Wales	Negative: Unnecessary use and funding of offsets may prevent other carbon reduction opportunities and their co-benefits being realised (e.g., improved urban 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: Becoming net zero carbon through the use of high-quality carbon offsets can mitigate against climate change as well as other co-benefits.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	-

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>1. Climate Change Strategy https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Climate-Change/Climate-Change-Strategy-2022-2030.pdf</p> <p>2. United Nations REDD Programme UNREDD Programme (un-redd.org)</p> <p>3. PAS 2060 Carbon Neutral Standard PAS 2060 - Carbon Neutrality BSI (bsigroup.com)</p> <p>4. Gold Standard The Gold Standard</p> <p>5. Verra Verified Carbon Standard Verified Carbon Standard - Verra</p> <p>6. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) WWF - Endangered Species Conservation World Wildlife Fund</p> <p>7. South South North SouthSouthNorth – Towards climate resilience</p> <p>8. Woodland Carbon Code Home - UK Woodland Carbon Code</p> <p>9. UK Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines Environmental reporting guidelines: including Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting requirements - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>10. The Peatland Code UK Peatland Code IUCN UK Peatland Programme (iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org)</p> <p>11. Aldi UK & Ireland Carbon Neutrality Our Environment - Carbon Neutrality - ALDI UK</p> <p>12. Allstar Woodland Code Allstar Business Solutions - UK Woodland Carbon Code</p> <p>13. Allstar EcoPoint Programme Home - Allstar EcoPoint</p> <p>14. Evian Sustainability Climate Impact & Reducing Our Carbon Footprint evian®</p> <p>15. Goldstandard Marketplace Projects – Gold Standard Marketplace</p> <p>16. Clean Cooking Alliance Health Clean Cooking Alliance</p>

<p>17. Gold Standard – Planting Biodiverse Forests in Panama Planting Biodiverse Forests in Panama – Gold Standard Marketplace</p> <p>18. UK Government – Reporting Greenhouse Gas Removals and Emissions from Domestic Woodland Creation Guidance on reporting greenhouse gas removals and emissions from domestic woodland creation (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p> <p>19. Overstated carbon emission reductions from voluntary REDD+ projects in the Brazilian Amazon Overstated carbon emission reductions from voluntary REDD+ projects in the Brazilian Amazon PNAS</p> <p>20. Quality Assessment of REDD+ Executive Summary Quality-Assessment-of-REDD+-Carbon-Crediting-EXECUTIVE-SUMMARY.pdf (berkeley.edu)</p> <p>21. Planting Monocultures Carbon Offset Schemes Only Make Sense With Mixed-Species Forests Earth.Org</p> <p>22. Science-based Targets Initiative (SBTi) Technical Summary https://sciencebasedtargets.org/resources/files/Pathway-to-Net-Zero.pdf</p> <p>23. Science-based Targets Initiative (SBTi) Net Zero Standard https://sciencebasedtargets.org/resources/files/Net-Zero-Standard.pdf</p>

7.00	OFFICER CONTACT DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Ben Turpin – Climate Change Project Officer</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 703393</p> <p>E-mail: ben.turpin@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Carbon Credit: A measurable, verifiable emission reductions from certified climate action projects. A credit is typically the value of 1 tCO₂ which another organisation purchased to balance their carbon emissions.</p> <p>Carbon Neutral: Carbon Dioxide neutral only, where offsets (either avoided or removals) can be used to balance the carbon dioxide emissions of an organization or any uniquely identified subject such as a specific activity, product, service, building, project or event.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Offsets (Avoided): Avoided emissions are when a company pays another entity to not do something that would have resulted in greenhouse gas emissions or pays to change practices to emit less carbon.</p>

Offsets (Removal): Carbon dioxide that already exists in the atmosphere is removed through such methods as tree sequestration.

Permanence: The period of time that a carbon removal project can keep the carbon dioxide it is stored out of the atmosphere (e.g., 100 years).

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

TCO_{2e}: Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

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CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Item	Responsible / Contact	Actions
25 th Jan 2023	Climate Change Programme Overview and Progress	To receive an update from the Programme Manager - Climate Change & Carbon Reduction	Alex Ellis – Programme Manager	
	Motion – Carbon Footprint of Homeworking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To recommend that Cabinet reviewed the Home Working Policy, establishing a coherent and climate-informed framework for the council. 2. To recommend to Cabinet that a study was commissioned in respect of total net emissions from homeworking, in the form of a survey of Flintshire staff as per Welsh Government guidance 3. To recommend that as an interim measure pending the completion of a review of the climate evidence, the council should allow anyone who wished to work from the office in Winter to do so, particularly considering rising heating costs, and 4. To instruct the Chair to write to the Welsh Government’s Climate Change Minister requesting that a mechanism that accurately reflected seasonal variation in net homeworking emissions was included in the guidance for assessing emissions, such that the council was not penalised for taking steps to reduce 	Cllr Ibbotson	Recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet.

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Item	Responsible / Contact	Actions
		total emissions at the expense of those that show on its own figures.		
	Motion – Print free Council	<p>The Committee recommended to Cabinet that a policy be implemented across all departments setting out that printing should only be considered where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a statutory requirement to provide information in printed form. • A disabled staff member or service user requires material in printed form because they are disabled. • A staff member or service user required material in printed form because they are digitally excluded. • The relevant Chief Officer had directed that a paper backup of the document was necessary for service resilience, or • For the purposes of advertising a service or change in service to the public; and • That all paper, toners, inks and consumables procured be made of recycled materials and recycled after use. • The committee also called on the Cabinet to initiate an efficiency review of the current stock of printers owned or operated by the council with a view to rationalising these to the minimum strictly necessary. 	Cllr Rose	Recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet.

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Item	Responsible / Contact	Actions
	Motion – Columbaria in Flintshire Managed Cemeteries – Environmentally Friendly Bereavement Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To recommend to Cabinet and the Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee that Flintshire County Council offer Columbaria as an option for residents as part of its suite of bereavement and burial services. 2. To recommend to Cabinet and the Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee that Flintshire County Council explore the viability of offering other environmentally friendly burial options, such as Resomation, in the longer term 	Cllr Swash	Recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet.
	Motion – Flood Resilience and Adaptation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the inquiry be established by the Committee on the basis set out as outlined in the motion 2. That provision is made for an oral evidence session, including a venue, in either April or May. 	Cllr Ibbotson	That the Chair of the Committee progress the recommendations above.
	Motion – Clwyd Pension Fund Divestment - 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Committee commissions an inquiry into the climate performance and targets of the Clwyd Pension Fund. 2. That this inquiry shall take written and oral evidence as set out in section 3. 3. That the inquiry will report back to the committee at the July meeting. 	Cllr Ibbotson	That the Chair of the Committee progress the recommendations above.

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Item	Responsible / Contact	Actions
Tues 28th March	Climate Change Programme Review	To review and approve the areas of focus within the programme for the coming year.	Alex Ellis, Programme Manager	
	Policy on EV charging infrastructure for off street parking	That the Cabinet Member for Streetscene be asked to report to this Committee and the Environment & Economy Committee on the feasibility of offering the installation of cable ducts between houses and the street to enable owners of electric vehicles without off street parking to safely run cables across pavements, with the cost of these to be met by the resident in the same way as dropped kerb installations. To ask the Cabinet to adopt a policy of enabling all council tenants to have install, or have installed on request, electric vehicle charging points at home.	Cllr Ibbotson	Recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet
	Hydro power and Milwr Tunnel	Cllrs Healey & Bithell to lead discussion on Milwr tunnel and the potential of hydro power within Flintshire.	Cllr Eastwood	
Tues 23rd May	Thermal energy utilising former coal mines	Cllr Allan Marshall to lead discussion on thermal energy and potential within Flintshire. Recommend to Cabinet and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee to take note of the above report and widen scope on what represents renewable energy capture systems in Flintshire.	Cllr Marshall	Recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet.

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Item	Responsible / Contact	Actions
	Reaching out to wider community on Climate Change	To discuss content of Communication & Engagement Plan for Programme and agree approach for Committee engagement with young people.	Cllr Healey	Programme Manager to implement feedback into Plan
Tues 18th July	Climate Change Programme Communication & Engagement Plan	To adopt the Communication & Engagement Plan for the Climate Change Programme	Programme Manager Climate Change	
	Local Area Energy Plan update	To receive an update on the development of the Flintshire County Energy Plan and contribute to stakeholder engagement.	Programme Manager Climate Change	Programme Manager to collate feedback and forward to ARUP
	Feasibility of bioreactors for grass arisings/food waste	To receive a report on the opportunities and constraints with the use of anaerobic digestion for grass arisings.	Cllr Rose	
	Planning changes to incorporate requirements for Passivhaus/solar/EV charging	<p>To receive a report on the opportunities and constraints present in current planning policy in relation to incorporation of carbon reduction methods.</p> <p>That Members note the content of this report and the planning framework available to facilitate renewable energy development and carbon reduction via the planning system.</p> <p>That a letter be sent to the Minister for Climate Change to outline the Committee's frustrations in terms of Planning legislation around how far this could be pushed as far as solar panels and minimum standard of energy security.</p>	Cllr Rose & Cllr Mansell	Committee to prepare a letter to the Minister for Climate Change.

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Item	Responsible / Contact	Actions
	Hydrogen provision and hydrogen fuelled vehicles	To receive an update on the development of the 'Hydrogen Hub' in providing a source of hydrogen for Flintshire's future energy needs.	Cllr Eastwood	
Wed 6th Sept	Welsh Government Heat Strategy Consultation	To discuss the Welsh Government's Heat Strategy and record comments to include in the coordinated response.	Programme Manager Climate Change	Programme Manager to collate feedback and respond to consultation
	Review of catering facilities – mandatory plant based meals	To receive a report on the current school provision and ongoing work by Welsh Local Government Association to revise existing statutory guidance on healthy eating in maintained schools.	Cllr Rose & Cllr Preece	
	Carbon offsetting – tree planting	To receive a report on the current status of carbon offsetting within Flintshire's land assets, and support the development of a land use analysis decision flow chart for the management of its land assets.	Cllr Mansell & Cllr Ibbotson	
Tues 28th Nov	Decarbonisation of supply chain	To receive an introduction from the new Joint Procurement Low Carbon Business Partner.	Programme Manager Climate Change	
	Installation of cable ducts for on-street parking	Update on the potential installation of cable ducts to enable householders without off-street parking to safely charge electric vehicles, as discussed at the March meeting.	Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Regional Transport Strategy / Chief Officer for Streetscene & Transportation	

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Item	Responsible / Contact	Actions
	Flintshire Council Carbon Footprint 2022-23	To receive a report on the updated carbon footprint for the Council.	Programme Manager Climate Change	
	Zero Carbon Advertising Policy	Drafting a policy that Council will not accept advertisements for fossil fuel products/companies. Sponsored roundabouts, etc.	Cllr Bithell	
	Inquiries Update	Update and next steps on the public inquiries	Cllr Ibbotson	
17th Jan 2024	Carbon emissions of factory farming in Flintshire		Cllr Turton	
19th March 2024	Policy on use of commercial offsets for carbon offsetting	Use of commercial offsets for carbon offsetting	Cllr Ibbotson	
	Contingency Planning for extreme heat	To discuss contingency planning for extreme heat with North Wales Councils' Regional Emergency Planning Service	Cllr Ibbotson	
25th June 2024	Feasibility of leasing car park spaces to third party companies for vehicle charging	Feasibility of leasing car park spaces to third party companies so that they may install electric car charging points at strategic places within the County (CCM3)	Cllr Eastwood	
	Climate Change Programme Progress Report	To receive an update on progress within the climate change programme, and identified areas of focus for the coming year.	Programme Manager Climate Change	
	Use of Bio-diesel for fleet	Feasibility of the use of biodiesel for fleet. How is FCC currently supplied with diesel	Cllr Eastwood	

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Item	Responsible / Contact	Actions
		for its fleet and whether either bio-diesel or HVO biodiesel could be supplied and used instead, and the potential provision of fuel to employees/members (CCM2, CCM5, CCM6).		
Separate workshop	Climate Adaptation – identifying risks and mitigation	To discuss the risks of a changing climate to Flintshire county, and consideration of mitigation in adapting to the changes in the climate.	Programme Manager Climate Change	Early Dec workshop
Site visit Opportunities	Danger point – new climate change theme Parc Adfer – energy from waste School site visits			