

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 8 th February 2022
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 carbon neutral 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 carbon neutral Council by 2030.

The Climate Change Strategy details the Council's work undertaken so far; its baseline carbon emissions; areas that need to be progressed and projected future state should these actions be completed to propel the Council towards its net zero carbon / carbon neutral goal by 2030.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That progress made in delivering carbon reduction measures to date is acknowledged.
2	That the Climate Change Strategy for 2022 – 2030 and its aims therein be endorsed.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY
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 carbon neutral by 2030. In December 2019 Cabinet resolved to develop a Climate Change Strategy which would set key aims and actions for creating a carbon neutral Council. Work has been carried out to determine the Council's baseline carbon emissions, and from this, a strategy developed to decarbonise the Council's activities and services.</p>
1.02	<p>Purpose:</p> <p>The Climate Change Strategy (Appendix 1) sets out the Council's objectives and actions to move towards our net-zero carbon goal. The Strategy has been through an engagement process involving Members (through the Climate Change Programme Board), Officers, the public and our young people. The scope identified within this Strategy focusses on the changes and impacts that can be made directly by the Council to reduce both its own emissions and those of the wider County. The Strategy identified objectives and actions to reduce our direct carbon emissions, and then actions to reduce our wider emissions and those of the wider county.</p>
1.03	<p>There will be financial implications associated with these actions both within capital and revenue budgets. There have been external sources of funding available for specific decarbonisation activities and the expectation is that these sources will continue to be available to support the Council's aims. As actions within the strategy are further developed, and identification of necessary resources, business cases will support these investment needs.</p>
1.04	<p>By working to achieve these goals Flintshire County Council can make its contribution to tackling the climate emergency and a net zero Wales by 2050 as detailed in Climate Change (Wales) Regulations 2021. Furthermore, achieving the Council's own well-being goals and those within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. As climate change and the environment are intrinsically linked the Council will also deliver on its statutory duties within Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to maintain and enhance biodiversity.</p>
2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Financial resource implications</p> <p>Capital: Business cases will be developed as appropriate to support investment in decarbonisation and / or carbon sequestration activities.</p>

	Revenue: As above, business cases will also identify any revenue implications.
2.02	Human Resources: Project management support and specific decarbonisation roles situated within relevant portfolios will be necessary to embed decarbonisation across the Council and achieve our net zero carbon aims.

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 carbon neutrality. Financial risk will be assessed on a project by project basis. A full integrated impact assessment has been completed, attached as an appendix to this report, which members are advised to read.	
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

	<p>integrates with the following priorities under the Council Plan; Green Council, Ambitious Council and Supportive Council. It integrates with the public service board objectives in the Environment priority of the Wellbeing Plan as well as the Smart Access to Energy project in the North Wales Growth Deal. It also integrates with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Welsh Government's decarbonisation of the public sector agenda.</p>
Collaboration	<p>Positive: The climate change programme offers multiple opportunities to work collaboratively both internally and externally – and this collaboration will determine the success of the programme. Collaboration with the following groups is needed to ensure decarbonisation is integrated into everything that the Council and the wider region does and plans for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welsh Government - Other public sector organisations such as local authorities, NRW, health boards, universities. - Private sector - Regional groups such as the North Wales Economic Ambition Board - Local Town and County Councillors - the local communities
Involvement	<p>Positive: If decarbonisation is to succeed and harmful climate change is to be avoided then everyone at a professional and personal level will need to be involved</p>
<p>Well-being Goals Impact</p>	
Prosperous Wales	<p>Positive: Reducing the Council's carbon emissions should enable strategic investment in projects and ways of working that could deliver savings or generate new 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.</p>
Resilient Wales	<p>Positive: Decarbonisation of the Council's activities and services will promote resilience through actions such as: investment in renewable energy</p>

		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	<p>Consultation and engagement has been carried out both internally and externally.</p> <p>Internal workshops both with Academi and Members were carried out during 2019 and 2020 which identified work carried out to date and potential future projects to deliver on carbon aims.</p>

	<p>A public engagement period took place during October and November 2021 where the strategy's themes and proposed actions were offered for agreement and comment. Feedback from this exercise was very positive with further action suggestions put forward.</p> <p>A young person's engagement with schools was carried out striking the conversation on climate change and pupils submitted letters to their future selves on how they think the world will look in 50 years and what they hope has been achieved in that time to combat climate change.</p> <p>The feedback from the public engagement period was further developed in internal workshops with each of the portfolio areas across the Council's services. The Climate Change Programme Board and Officer Group carried out scenario planning to develop the interventions needed and the objectives and actions have been explored and reviewed with focus on wording and realistic timeframes.</p>
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5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 – Climate Change Strategy 2022 – 2030</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Appendix to Strategy – Climate Change Strategy Action Plan</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Integrated Impact Assessment</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Prosperity for all – a low carbon Wales https://gov.wales/prosperity-all-low-carbon-wales</p>

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

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
	<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>

Carbon sequestration: the process involved in carbon capture and the long term storage of atmospheric carbon dioxide.

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

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

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