

## Climate Change Committee

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Climate Change Strategy Action Plan June 2024 Update
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Collective Responsibility
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the internal audit of Climate change, sustainability and ESG, an action was agreed to provide the Climate Change Committee with action plan updates. The purpose of this is to identify risks and vulnerabilities within the Climate change strategy's themed action plans, including officer engagement and attendance of responsible officers at working group meetings to provide action updates/discussion.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1	To discuss the current progress of the Climate Change Strategy Action Plans, identify areas of risk/vulnerability, and suggest actions to mitigate these risks.
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### REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE REPORT</b>
1.01	<p>As part of the agreed Internal Audit Plan, an internal audit of the Council's climate change, environmental sustainability and ESG was undertaken.</p> <p>The purpose of the audit was to assess a number of risks related to the management of climate change, environmental sustainability and ESG within the Council. The audit provided some level of assurance, and also identified a number of areas where key controls were not generally adequate or effective.</p>

1.02	<p>Within the audit, there was an identified area for further improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ineffective action plans – the themed action plans do not consistently support the achievement of carbon ambitions on time and on budget.</li> </ul>
	<p>The agreed management action to address this risk was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly Climate Change Action Plan updates to Climate Change Committee to provide oversight of programme progress and deliverables.</li> </ul> <p>Appendix 1 shows the current status of the Action Plans. Work is underway within the Themed officer working groups to ensure all actions are SMART, have clear and measurable start and end dates and key milestones. Each action has been allocated a risk rating which has been determined within a separate Risk Assessment document (Appendix 3).</p> <p>The actions determined to be at high risk are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CCBu3 – Improving the standard of energy efficiency within Council buildings through retrofit measures. This is due to the financial risk in securing the appropriate funding needed to decarbonise the building assets. High level costings determined that this could be in excess of £66 million. This risk is being mitigated through the Capital Programme and inclusion of investment within the MTF5. Welsh Government have commissioned condition surveys of all school buildings across Wales which will assist in obtaining a baseline position from which to calculate more detailed costings and a timeline of works to achieve the action. The current RE:fit framework will also provide retrofit works on our building assets, potentially levying a substantial amount of funding from external sources with the committed £1.5 million capital funds used as match.</li> <li>CCBu5 – Design and refurbish buildings for carbon neutral/low energy operation. Again, financial risk associated with cost increases for materials and contracts not covered by allocated capital or grant funding. New build schools and care home are being designed to net zero carbon in operation (NZCio) so additional costs are factored into the project from an early stage. Building to this spec also levies external funding.</li> <li>CCBu7 - Continue to carry out flood investigation and alleviation to identify proactive mitigation measures &amp; prevent recurrent flooding. Due to issues with recruitment, there has been a historic lack of staffing within this team which has prevented progress of this action. However, all vacant roles will be filled by August 2024, providing a full complement of staff. Works within this stream are reliant on external funding, but business cases are being developed for Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales funding.</li> <li>CCM1 – Review Fleet Policy with consideration for charging vehicles. A change of fleet vehicle management risks disrupting the review process by reallocating resources and delaying the process to decarbonise fleet. A corporate wide feasibility study on operational estates is ongoing which is taking into consideration the</li> </ul>

	<p>requirements for charging/hydrogen infrastructure. The working groups within the fleet management change must ensure the review of the policy is considered as part of the transition process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCM4 – 6 – Transition of fleet vehicles to electric/alternative fuels. As above, the charging infrastructure is not currently in place to support this transition. The feasibility study will guide the Council’s pathway to fleet management while supporting the transition to low carbon alternatives.</li> <li>• CCL13 – Create guidelines for Council procurement of food in offices, schools, etc, to be local and sustainable. Action is not due to start until 2025, however there is currently no officer identified to lead on this action, and the associated risks around increased cost/availability of local sources and any potential changes in legislation will have a significant impact on the action’s success. We have time to plan in resource to drive this action forward.</li> <li>• CCL17 – Identify opportunities to acquire new Council land for the purpose of carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancement. The current Land use report will identify current Council land assets that can support carbon sequestration. Once these opportunities have been exhausted there may be a need to look beyond Council land. Land acquisition is cost prohibitive and lack of available land and competition will make acquisitions challenging. Once new net zero carbon trajectories have been determined, a report identifying the cost of closing the gap to net zero will help determine the cost v benefit of land acquisition.</li> </ul>
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p>Officer time from teams across the Council is needed within the Themed working groups to ensure that the Climate change strategy and action plan are maintained, current, and risks associated with individual actions/projects are identified and mitigated.</p> <p>The Climate Change Strategy review over 2024-25 will require time of both officers across the Council and Elected Members, to ensure that all are engaged and take ownership of the updated strategy for the Council.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	<p>The recommendations will ensure that the Council addresses the risks identified in the internal audit report. Actions undertaken intend to minimise the risk of failure in the Council’s ability to meet its carbon reduction ambitions.</p>

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Climate Action Tracker July 2024  Appendix 2 – Climate Action Risk Assessment July 2024

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>OFFICER CONTACT DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Alex Ellis – Climate Change Programme Manager <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703112 <b>E-mail:</b> alex.ellis@flintshire.gov.uk

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Baseline Year:</b> The emissions that occurred in the period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 are what targets are based on and all future carbon emission calculations compared to.</p> <p><b>Carbon emissions:</b> 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e.</p> <p><b>Carbon Footprint:</b> A measurement of the council’s carbon emissions during a defined period of time, given as tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e)</p> <p><b>Decarbonisation</b> – Reduction of carbon emissions that result from an activity, material or product</p> <p><b>Greenhouse Gas/ Carbon emissions:</b> 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> How the collected raw data used for carbon emission calculations is managed and rated in terms of its reliability. This is governed by Welsh Government.</p> <p><b>Net Zero Carbon:</b> 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>