

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 8 th January 2025
Report Subject	Climate Change Strategy Review update
Cabinet Member	Collective Responsibility
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The climate change strategy has been under review this financial year with a number of internal and external workshops and engagements taking place with officers across all levels; Academi, public survey, public engagement events and Member workshops.

The key messaging from this engagement will be reflected within the reviewed strategy.

This report details the activities that have been delivered as part of the review, and outlines the key messaging coming from this engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To update the Committee on the status and progress with the Climate Change strategy review, key themes and messaging, proposed changes, and timescale for draft strategy.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REPORT
1.01	<p>As detailed within the Climate Change Strategy, a review of the strategy was planned to take place over 2024-25.</p> <p>As part of this process, from June – November 2024, the Climate Change team have been engaging with internal and external stakeholders. This engagement has helped to shape the revised strategy to ensure that the Council is meeting the needs of its stakeholders and that there is buy in</p>

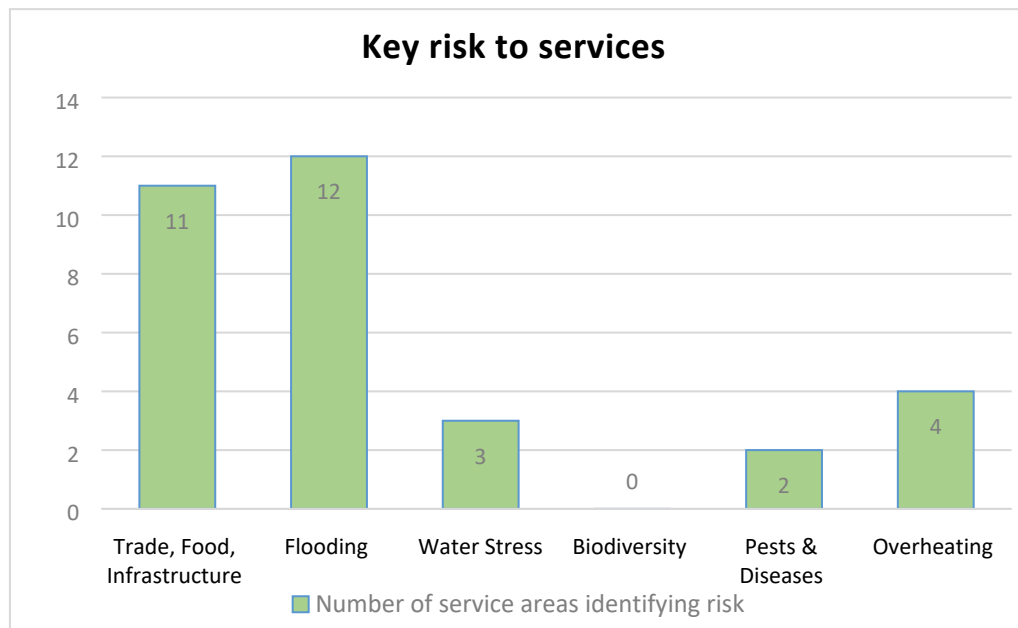
from our stakeholders in driving the strategy forwards and reaching the Council's aims and ambitions, while providing the most impact and support for the wider county of Flintshire.

1.02

Senior Leaders

In June, a workshop was held at Senior Leaders Academi. Within this session Senior Leaders considered progress within the programme to date, and focussed on climate risk and how their services could be adapted to mitigate the impacts of a changing climate.

The feedback from the breakouts was grouped into the main climate risk areas and could be divided as per the graph below.



This demonstrates the perception of the biggest risk areas to delivery of Council services, and the comments provided will be included within a new Climate risk section within the revised strategy.

This workshop was followed up by a session within each Service's Management team meetings. Managers were asked to advise areas that they liked or disliked about the current strategy. Key themes from this were:

- Positive that we have a strategy that is educating and driving change
- Scale of resource available means that change, particularly transport, is going to be slow
- Frustration in relation to waiting for Corporate colleagues to action matters
- The changes in methodology skew the figures in the carbon footprint so that it is difficult to see the positive action that has been taken

Managers were then asked what should be done next to drive change:

- Celebrate achievements that have happened to date – build momentum
- Use simple easy to understand language
- Need to develop transport policies and strong school travel plans to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - try and change employee and parental behaviour (schools) - Resource it better <p>Finally, Managers were asked what they considered their role to be in achieving NZC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Policy/strategy development - Pushing the message through my teams and networks - Fully embracing hybrid and paperless working - Securing funding to implement projects in my service that support net zero carbon aims. - Plant more trees.
1.03	<p>Elected Members</p> <p>In July, a workshop was held with Elected Members. This workshop was attended by 21 Members. The session was precluded by an introduction to climate change and the impacts on Council services, international, national and local policy, and action taken to date. Members considered each of the themes within the strategy (Buildings, Mobility & Transport, Procurement, Land Use and Behaviour) and what actions they felt should be prioritised or if there were actions that had not been included that should be. Comments included the need to push Welsh Government to change policy and provide resource to support net zero, invest in public transport system, and provide better incentives for land use.</p> <p>The session closed with the question ‘What is your role as an Elected Member in achieving the Council’s net zero carbon goal?’. Responses reflected the need for Members to communicate events and information to their communities in order to encourage them to take climate action.</p>
1.04	<p>Cross-departmental engagement</p> <p>Workshops were held for each of the Officer Working groups for the strategy themes: Buildings, Mobility & Transport, Procurement, Land Use and Behaviour.</p> <p>These workshops looked at the action plan in detail to determine what actions were still relevant, what actions needed to be reviewed and updated, and what new actions needed to be considered for inclusion.</p> <p>These were the main points highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unfunded and low resource to achieve objectives - there has to be an honest understanding - Challenging economic climate - Not too much to dislike - case of refinement - Ease of communication for a broader/younger audience is highlighted on a number of occasions as well as celebrating achievements - Risk Assessment/Register to identify vulnerabilities in services/assets - Land retention has been picked up. How do we better identify its value to communities and council to prevent its sale - Need to further understand the wider benefits of actions within business cases (community benefit, capital/cost saving, carbon reduction, etc.)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Societal benefits/ supporting vulnerable people should be a clear focus of climate action (energy efficiency/affordability) <p>Further workshops with these groups will look at a revised trajectory for NZC and revised milestones to meet interim targets.</p>
1.05	<p>External and Public Engagement</p> <p>In terms of public engagement, the team have carried out a number of public events throughout the year including: Mold market, Earth Day, First Fridays Hope, Flint Pride, Net Zero Week and Wales Climate week. Within these events the public were asked what was important to them and how climate action could positively support these factors. They were also asked what they thought should be included within the Climate Change strategy.</p> <p>A public survey was open from 22nd August to 4th October and received 201 responses with over 700 written pieces of feedback.</p> <p>85% of respondents felt that the Council should be taking action on climate change. Main societal issues they would like to see improved through climate action were: Public transport, air quality and cost of living. Questions then moved into the specific themes of the strategy and what action they felt should be prioritised in each of these areas. Key feedback focussed on: Adapting buildings for the future, improving transport infrastructure, keeping suppliers local, promoting sustainable farming and providing training/information for the public.</p> <p>As well as the Climate change strategy review survey, questions relevant to the Council's climate action were included in the Council's 'Council Plan' public survey. Responses from this survey focussed on prioritisation of public facing climate action, rather than focussed on action that solely improves the Council's footprint. For example, improving public transport was ranked higher than decarbonising the Council's own fleet vehicles.</p> <p>A workshop was also held with the Flintshire & Wrexham Joint Public Services Board (PSB) Communities Board to gain feedback on the current strategy, and to consider a joined up approach to identifying climate risks and adaptation. Following this session, the PSBs across North Wales have agreed to progress a regional approach to climate risk assessment which the Council will continue to contribute towards.</p>
1.06	<p>Engagement with Young People</p> <p>A number of activities were carried out with young people as part of the review engagement. Hawarden High Pride event, Ysgol Maes Glas consultation and an event with Young Flintshire.</p> <p>The workshop at Ysgol Maes Glas provided engagement from younger members of the county (Yrs 2 – 6) who fed back to us on things that were important to them. They felt that: Making buildings ready for climate impacts, active travel getting to and from school, better recycling, planting urban trees, and local sustainable food, were actions that they thought should be prioritised.</p> <p>The Young Flintshire event saw 25 participants representing 11 Secondary education schools and Youth Council (Young Carers). Young people fed</p>

	<p>back on their thoughts on the current strategy and what they would like to see changed/improved. They voted for societal issues they felt were most important to them and Mental health & wellbeing, Cost of living, Health care and Climate change ranked highest. They then split into break outs and looked at each of the strategy's themes to determine what they thought should be included in these themes and provides their thoughts on action the Council had taken to date. Most important action to them was: Moving away from fossil fuel heating, public transport, urban trees, local sustainable food, solar/wind on land, and school climate action.</p>
1.07	<p>Throughout the review process over 400 people have been engaged from a number of stakeholder groups.</p> <p>To summarise all engagement carried out these are the headline points for consideration in the revised strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More information/education and communication – around climate change, actions, benefits and support to drive acceptance and culture change. - Improved/more efficient Public transport – recurring theme throughout all engagement. - Cost to the public (how action is funded and transparency) – regarding climate change mitigation
1.08	<p>Strategy Structure/Elements</p> <p>Summarised feedback on the current strategy has been labelled with Must/Should/Could, and referenced within PESTLE (Political, Environmental, Social, Technological, Legal, Economic).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elements of the strategy are unfunded/low resource and needs to be honest stating the gaps – Political, Economic, Technological (Should) - Needs to be more communicative, building wider understanding and celebrating achievements (keep simple: Funding Source/ Action/ Benefits) – Political, Social, Economic (Must) - Greater focus on Societal Benefits from council action (E.g. vulnerable people, cost savings, health) – Can these lead the conversation more than carbon reduction? – Political, Social, Economical (Should) - Accessible format of strategy, especially for young people – Social, Legal (Must) - Show Asset-based pathways to decarbonise (show how buildings and other assets will be decarbonised and when) – Economic, Technological, Environmental (Could) - Better data to provide clearer understanding of opportunities and monitoring (Assets, paper use, etc.) – Economic, Technological (Must) - Greater Cross-departmental collaboration - (All) (Must) - Carbon data split by portfolio to engage and focus all areas of the Council – (All) (Should) - Mapping of achievements across the county – Political, Social, Technological Economic (Could) - Impact on council tax with rising climate action (public relate their council tax going towards carbon reduction, and should be spent

	better – need to better explain funding) – Political, Economic, Social (Should)
1.09	<p>Climate Actions</p> <p>Summarised feedback on climate actions within the strategy has been labelled with Must/Should/Could, and referenced within PESTLE (Political, Environmental, Social, Technological, Legal, Economical).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviewing of actions to address priority conflicts with services – Political, Economic, Social (Must) - Include a Climate Change Risk Assessment (at a service level helping to drive culture change)– Likely all (Must) - Engage with planning policy – Likely all (Should) - Community Group engagement widening influence and resource – Economic, Social (Should) - Climate Champion role across council to support teams and grow culture – Social (Should) - Strong response on the need for Public Transport & Active Travel Infrastructure (stronger emphasis in Strategy and actions – what can we do?) – Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental (Must) - Drop-in regional workspaces to reduce travel emissions/support flexible working - Political, Environmental, Social (Could) - Climate policy override decisions – Likely all (Could) - Utilise Universities for R&D – Political, Economic, Technological (Could) - Regular communication directly to members (Benefits & Actions Done) – Political, Social (Must)
1.10	On conclusion of the engagement phase of the strategy review, the carbon actions, reduction trajectories based on past reductions and best case scenario, and where possible financial implications, will be reviewed for input into the draft revised climate change strategy.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Resource implications will be determined on a project by project basis through development of a business case.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	As detailed in the report content.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>The reviewed Climate Change Strategy allows the opportunity for the Council to refresh and revise its action plan while considering mitigation of the following Corporate risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RPE11 Affordability of the Council being able to achieve its net zero carbon goal due to inability to commit or attract sufficient resources. - RPE36 – Inability to achieve the Council’s goal of net zero carbon and non conformance with Welsh government requirements due to advances in calculation methodologies and technological improvements. - RPE37 – Unable to meet climate change initiatives by designated deadlines leading to reputational damage for the Council. - RPE46 – Inability of the Council to identify the risks associated with the impacts of climate change, causing risk to resilience of Council services and its commitments and the ability to adapt to a changing climate. - RPE55 – Inability of the Council to cost its carbon reduction strategy causing issues with identification and commitment of funds to realise the actions needed to become a net zero carbon Council.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Climate Change Strategy Review Milestone Plan 2. Public survey report

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	-

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

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Carbon emissions: Used interchangeably with greenhouse gas emissions; meaning emissions of carbon dioxide, methane etc from human and natural activities and sources. Wider greenhouse gas emissions are collectively calculated into a ‘carbon dioxide equivalent’ displayed as CO₂e.</p> <p>Carbon Footprint: A measurement of the council’s carbon emissions during a defined period of time, given as tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e)</p>

Decarbonisation – Reduction of carbon emissions that result from an activity, material or product

Greenhouse Gas/ Carbon emissions: 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.

Methodology: 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.

Net Zero Carbon (NZC): 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.