

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET

Date of Meeting: 11 February 2025
Cabinet Member: Councillor Nia Jeffreys
Relevant Officer: Dafydd Gibbard, Chief Executive
Title of Item: Climate and Nature Emergency Plan: Annual Report 2023/24

Report to a meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

1. Decision Sought

- i. That the Cabinet considers and approves the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan: Annual Report 2023/24.
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2. The reason why the Cabinet needs to make the decision

- i. Cyngor Gwynedd's [Climate and Nature Emergency Plan](#) was adopted at the beginning 2022/23 and the first [Annual Report 2022/23](#) looking back at progress made during the first year was published following a Cabinet meeting in December 2023.
- ii. Following suit, this is an opportunity for Cabinet to decide if they are satisfied that the Annual Report in Appendix 1 provides an accurate and balanced picture of the work undertaken during 2023/24 to meet the ambition of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan (CNEP).
- iii. The Annual Report provides evidence on how Cyngor Gwynedd has been implementing Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The relevant information is in chapter 3 and then at the end of each of chapters 6 to 12.
- iv. A draft version of the Annual Report was discussed at a meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd's Communities Scrutiny Committee on 23 January, and the committee's comments are summarised in 4. Below.
- v. Cabinet can provide comments and guidance on the future trajectory of the work of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan.

3. Background

- i. The Council adopted the [Climate-and-Nature-Emergency-Plan.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#) following a Cabinet meeting on 8 March 2022. The ambition of the plan is "Gwynedd Council will be net zero carbon

and ecologically positive by 2030." "Responding to the climate change crisis" is also one of the Council's 8 Improvement Priorities within [The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#).

- ii. The Climate and Nature Emergency Plan (the Plan/CNEP) outlines how we as a Council will adapt the way we work and deliver services to reduce our carbon emissions and increase carbon absorption capacity. It provides examples of projects we will be pursuing, their outline costs and the timeframe to deliver.
- iii. Cyngor Gwynedd, like most public sector bodies in Wales, collects data on carbon emissions and absorption following a methodology developed by the Welsh Government. We collected data for the 2023/24 year following these processes, and are using 2019/20 data as our baseline year for comparison.
- iv. We need to collect data about the carbon derived from our procurement processes, but the current methodology is based on measuring by financial expenditure alone. Simply put, the more we spend, the greater the emissions. Because this can paint an imperfect picture of the true situation the Annual Report sets out two different sets of data – with procurement and without procurement data.
- v. Based on this data we know how much the 'gap to net zero' is and therefore how much more work lies ahead if we are to reach our target.

4. Recommendations of the Communities Scrutiny Committee

- i. The Annual Report was presented to a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee on 23rd January 2025 and their comments and recommendations of matters to be discussed by Cabinet are set out below:
 - ii. To accept the report noting the comments submitted during the discussion
 - iii. Recommend that more information be included in the Annual Report on what is responsible for the carbon emissions percentages
 - iv. That the committee scrutinise the conclusions of a review of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan before Cabinet considers it
 - v. To ask the Leader of the Council to lobby the Welsh Government in relation to reviewing the methodology of measuring carbon emissions arising from procurement processes.
- vi. In relation to recommendation 4.iii above we will share detailed data with committee members directly, as there are too many spreadsheets for it to be practical to include everything within the Annual Report.
- vii. In relation to recommendation 4.iv above, we will ensure that the Communities Scrutiny Committee receives the new draft of the CNEP for scrutiny before it is submitted to the Council Cabinet.
- viii. An application has been submitted to the Leader of a Council to act on recommendation 4.v.

5. Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

- i. Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 says public authorities operating in Wales have a duty to maintain and improve biodiversity and to encourage ecosystem strength.
- ii. The Welsh Government published a national biodiversity strategy, the 'Nature Restoration Action Plan' in 2015 which outlined the commitment to reverse biodiversity loss in Wales, with which there are 6 objectives for action. In order to comply with the duty of Section 6 public authorities must publish a plan of their own based on the Welsh Government's plan, and then the progress needs to be reported upon.
- iii. Cyngor Gwynedd has been updating our own Nature Recovery Plan during 2024/25 to comply with the requirements of the Act, but in the meantime we are reporting on our progress against the 6 objectives of the national Nature Recovery Action Plan through the Climate and Nature Annual Report. The information can be found in chapter 3 and at the end of chapters 5 to 11.

6. Main Issues

- i. Chapter 5 of the Annual Report provides information on the levels of emissions and carbon absorption for which the Council was responsible, and on the all-important figure, which is the remaining gap to reach net zero. Our gap to net zero in 2023/24 was 17,430,668 kgCO₂e.
- ii. Carbon emissions from our procurement processes are currently based solely on expenditure, and this can paint a misleading picture of the true impact of our climate spending. Simply put, the more we spend the greater the emissions.
- iii. Cyngor Gwynedd's total carbon emissions, including procurement, fell by 16% between the baseline year 2019/20 and 2023/24. If we rule out procurement then the fall is 37%.
- iv. Looking at our carbon emission and absorption data, without taking into account procurement data, then our gap to net zero is 35% smaller in 2023/24 compared to 2019/20 and 1% less than 2022/23.

Funding the Plan

Income

- v. At the Council meeting on 3 March 2022 it was agreed to create a £3m 'climate plan fund' through the one-time revenue bid process, for the purpose of implementing the CNEP.
- vi. In addition, Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 22 November 2022 to use £2.8m of its general funds to fund an investment scheme in solar PV panels on 54 of our buildings, with the revenue savings contributing to our savings plan.
- vii. A number of the other projects in the CNEP, such as the PV project above, contribute to financial savings for the Council as well as saving carbon emissions. As many of them are pilot projects we do not yet have a firm certainty of the figures, but for example the Green Fleet Plan is expected to result in savings of £603,000 over 5 years, and the Lighting Upgrades Pilot Scheme will result in £53,000 of revenue savings.
- viii. As the operating costs of the CNEP projects are so high it is absolutely essential to attract additional funding from external sources in order to augment the internal fund referred to above. The grant funding supports a large number of our projects – eg. energy schemes, fleet purchases, projects run by Gwynedd Nature Partnership.

Expenditure

- ix. Up until the end of December 2024 £2,207,984 out of the Council's Climate Fund had either been spent or set aside to be spent. That leaves £792,015 remaining.

7. Next Steps and Timetable

- i. We will publish the Annual Report on our website and share information about it.
- ii. We will continue to discuss in partnership and build relationships with external partners to discuss lessons learned from each other's work, and how best to develop the work into the future.

Views of the Statutory Officers

Monitoring Officer:

I note that the Communities Scrutiny Committee has given the report it's consideration. The Cabinet should have due regard to its recommendations and the proposed response. I have no further comments to add from a proprietary perspective.

Chief Finance Officer:

I have no objections to the decision sought from the perspective of financial propriety.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Climate and Nature Emergency Plan: Annual Report 2023/24