

MEETING	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	22 January 2026
TITLE	Review of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	Scrutiny Forward Programme / The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 – A Green Gwynedd
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CABINET MEMBER	Cllr. Craig ab Iago

1. Why it needs scrutiny?

The Climate and Nature Emergency Plan Annual Report for 2023/24 was scrutinised at the Committee's meeting on 23 January 2025.

It was reported to the Committee that there was a proposal to undertake a review of the Plan. Part of the Committee's decision was:

"That the committee scrutinise the conclusions of a review of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan before it is considered by Cabinet."

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

- Proposed modifications to the Scheme
- Response to the public consultation
- What sources of funding have been identified?

3. Summary of the Key Matters

During 2025/26 the Council has been reviewing our Climate and Nature Emergency Plan to ensure it remains current and fit for purpose.

As a first step the Plan was reviewed by officials and members of the Climate and Nature Board, and some updates were suggested.

As a second step a public consultation was undertaken on the current Plan and proposals for updates, and the results of the consultation can be found at Appendix 1.

At the request of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee on 18 September 2025, the Cabinet Member for Environment and members of the Climate and Nature Board considered the Committee's recommendation – "that the Council's ambition to be net zero carbon by 2030 needs to be revisited and a realistic target for reducing carbon emissions should be considered".

Further information is provided in section 4 below which explains how this review of the Plan has considered the timetable and costs of delivering projects in order to achieve the ambition to be a net zero council.

The responses to the public consultation have been used, along with further comments from the Climate and Nature Board, to produce a new draft of the Plan – Version 2 – which can be found at Appendix 2. This draft is submitted to the Communities Scrutiny Committee for further scrutiny, before a final draft is submitted to a Cabinet meeting.

4. Background / Context

The Council adopted the [Climate-and-Nature-Emergency-Plan.pdf](#) following a meeting of the Cabinet on 8 March 2022. "Responding to the climate change crisis" is also one of the Council's 8 Improvement Priorities within [The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28](#).

The Climate and Nature Emergency Plan (the Plan/CNEP) outlines how we as a Council will adapt our way of working and delivering services in order to reduce our carbon emissions and increase carbon absorption capacity. It offers examples of projects we will be pursuing, their outline costs and the timeline for their completion.

The Plan became operational in April 2022 and the 3 annual reports evaluating the Plan's performance can be seen [here](#).

It was recognised from the outset that the current Plan focuses on the Council's internal operations, in order to contribute to the Welsh Government's target for the collective public sector to reach net zero. But when Gwynedd Council's Cabinet adopted the current Plan on 8 March 2022, it was stated that 'Phase 1' would be planning how to decarbonise the Council's own operations, and that 'Phase 2' would be planning how to support Gwynedd communities to reduce carbon emissions across the county as well as providing more information on how to respond to flood risk.

Phase 1, namely the implementation of the current Climate and Nature Emergency Plan, has been in place since April 2022, and will be ongoing work as far as we can see. In order to reach Phase 2 the Council's Climate and Nature Board decided that the Plan needed to be reviewed, and the residents of Gwynedd consulted on its content, in order to draw up a new work programme for the coming years up to 2030.

As the current Plan had been in place for 3 years by April 2025, the Climate and Nature Board (Board of elected members and officers) wanted to look specifically at the list of projects in chapters 8-14 to see if some of those projects needed to be modified or removed, or new ones added.

The content of the Plan was considered, and draft changes to the list of projects were proposed. On the basis of the new proposals a public consultation was carried out between 12 June and 31 July 2025 to seek views on:

- Do residents think climate change is important, and should it be a priority for the Council?
- Content of the current Plan
- Proposals on changes to existing projects and the addition of new projects

- What can Gwynedd Council do to support Gwynedd residents to reduce carbon emissions?

Response to the public consultation

The results of the consultation can be found in Appendix 1, but briefly the results show:

- 84% of respondents believe climate change is important to them
- 83% of respondents believe that Gwynedd Council should be taking action on climate change
- The majority of respondents agreed that the current Plan was understandable, with a clear vision and timetable, and that the aim was ambitious enough (between 56-75% agreed with the various statements)
- A majority (52%) disagreed that the Council is doing enough to support residents to adopt sustainable living and working habits
- The majority of respondents agreed that 10 new projects should be added to the Scheme (support for individual projects ranging between 59% and 79%)
- The projects with the highest percentages supported were 'continuing to implement Gwynedd Council's Flood Strategy' (79.5%), and 'working with community organisations to produce and distribute renewable energy' (78.8%)
- The projects with the highest percentages of disagreement were 'developing and implementing Gwynedd Council's Charging Strategy to develop the Council's public charging network and for the Council's fleet (21.2% disagree but 71.2% agree) and 'researching and measuring blue carbon absorption on our coastline (20.5% disagree but 59.6% agree)
- The topic of climate change placed as a top priority was 'reducing household fuel poverty' (63.3%)
- The additional benefit that follows from the highest scoring climate change action was 'access to public transport'.

Given the results of the consultation, some key points stand out – there is support for Gwynedd Council to be active in the area of climate change; there is support for the proposed changes to the CNEP; the Council needs to be doing more to help residents adopt sustainable living and working practices.

Proposed modifications to the Plan

On 18 September 2025 the Council's Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan Annual Report 2024/25. Following a wide-ranging discussion about the past and future of the Plan, the Committee's recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment was – "that the Council's ambition to be net zero carbon by 2030 needs to be revisited and consideration should be given to setting a realistic target for reducing carbon emissions".

In order to act on this recommendation the Climate and Nature Board reconsidered the CNEP in its entirety once again, but this time challenging the ambition of the original

Plan, which was "Gwynedd Council will be net zero carbon and ecologically positive by 2030".

This is an extremely challenging ambition, especially because there are so many factors affecting it which are beyond the control of the Council. One key factor is how the electricity generated and distributed through the National Grid is generated. The British government has announced their plan to ensure that 95% of Britain's electricity needs are generated through renewable means by 2030 - [Clean Power 2030 Action Plan - GOV.UK](#). If this plan is realised then it will directly lead to a significant reduction in Gwynedd Council's carbon emissions, particularly as we move towards a fleet of electric vehicles and electrify heat. Indeed, we depend on the British and Welsh governments to realise such national plans if we are to realise the ambition of net zero.

In the meantime, through the current projects of our Climate and Nature Emergency Plan, we as a Council are preparing to be ready to make the most of net zero energy provision. We are investing significantly in reducing Scope 1 emissions, which are the areas over which we have control, and have been doing so for over 15 years. Continuing to implement the projects described in the 'Buildings and Energy' and 'Mobility and Transport' chapters will primarily put us in the strongest possible position to take advantage of renewable energy electricity when it comes.

Finance

The realisation of all the old and new projects in Version 2 of the Plan will call for significantly higher investment than what is currently available to the Council. Our intention is to continue to pressure governments to increase existing investment. We will also explore all other possible sources, collaborating with the community sector and other public organisations in order to maximise what we can achieve together.

Welsh Government grants are a vital source to fund the work of the CNEP. They are mostly capital grants rather than revenue, so it is easier to fund infrastructure work and harder to find funding to cover running costs, maintenance, and staffing costs.

Between 2019/20 and 2024/25 we successfully attracted grants of £13.5m to support the work of the CNEP.

Project Review

As noted above, the first step taken in reviewing the Plan was to review the lists of projects in chapters 8 to 14. It is reasonable that some projects need to be adapted in order to respond to a changing world, or that some other projects have reached the end of their life and are therefore 'archived'.

Archived Projects:

1. Increasing our carbon 'credit' by installing solar farms to produce energy that the Council can use or sell
2. Electrification of building heating systems to reduce carbon emissions
3. Installing EC ventilation fans in buildings to reduce the energy required to run them compared to normal fans

4. Installing individual room heating regulations to reduce the energy required to heat a building
5. Upgrading street lights and traffic signs to reduce energy use
6. Maximising the benefits of implementing our energy and heating policies
7. Identify the steps we need to take to protect nature's habitats and biodiversity for the future
8. Protecting Nature's Valuable Habitats

Further details on the reason for archiving these projects can be found in section 15 of the Plan, but in a nutshell the most common reason is because a number of projects have been combined as they work towards the same goal. This means that the work is ongoing but that there is no need to describe the work as two separate projects.

New Projects

1. Review the potential for use of heat networks across Gwynedd, dependent on feasibility studies
2. Working with community organisations to produce and distribute renewable energy for the benefit of Gwynedd communities
3. Developing and encouraging active travel in Gwynedd's school catchment area
4. Implementing Gwynedd Council's Waste Strategy
5. Developing a Climate and Nature Adaptation Strategy
6. Gwynedd Council staff to implement the Sustainable Procurement Guidance to reduce carbon emissions through the supply chain
7. Provide market support, particularly to local providers, to take action that will reduce their emissions or increase carbon absorption levels
8. Recognising the carbon capture value of our landfill sites
9. Recognising the value of 'blue carbon' absorption on our coast
10. Implementing Gwynedd Council's Flood Strategy

Further details on each of the above projects can be found in chapters 8-14 of the Plan, with information on the reason for their inclusion, costs, timetable and potential carbon savings.

Measuring success

We will continue to collect data on Gwynedd Council's annual carbon emissions and submit them to the Welsh Government in accordance with the arrangements in place since 2021.

Those results are published in annual reports, which can be found [here](#).

5. Consultation

A public review of Gwynedd Council's Climate and Nature Emergency Plan was carried out between 12 June and 31 July 2025. See the results of the consultation at Appendix 1.

The results of the consultation were used to review the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan, as described in section 4 above. The results of the consultation and the current plan in its entirety were considered by the Climate and Nature Board (a committee of officers, Cabinet Members, a Biodiversity Champion and an elected member representing the scrutiny committees).

6. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Have you **included** residents / service users? If not, when and how do you intend to consult with them?

See 5 above.

Have you considered **collaboration**?

Chapters 11 and 12 of the Annual Report cover the work carried out in part by the Gwynedd Nature Partnership, namely a consortium of local organisations led by the Council. A number of other projects in CNEP are carried out in partnership with others, such as active travel projects in collaboration with Public Service Board partners.

The new review of the CNEP lists new projects where it will be absolutely essential to collaborate with community organisations and residents in order to achieve them – eg. 'collaborating with community organisations in order to produce and distribute renewable energy'.

What has been done or will be done to **prevent** problems arising or worsening in the future?

One of the basic principles of CNEP is to try to prevent further increases in the average temperature of the planet and to limit global warming to "well below 2°C" in accordance with the United Nations Paris Agreement. Each of the plan's projects seek to stabilise or even reverse the probability that the current situation will lead to further problems in the future.

How have you considered the **long-term** and what will people's needs be in coming years?

As noted above, the basis of the CNEP is to seek to prevent global warming problems from getting worse in the future, and while the Council has its own target of net zero

carbon by 2030 the Welsh Government has set a target for the whole of Wales to be net zero by 2050. The CNEP therefore also takes into account that changing the habits of Gwynedd's residents and businesses will be long-term work beyond 2030.

To ensure **integration** have you considered the possible impact on other public bodies?

A large number of CNEP projects are planned or implemented in collaboration with other public bodies or with the voluntary sector and communities. There is ongoing collaboration with other local authorities across north Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association, the Welsh Government's Energy Service, and Transport for Wales which has resulted in joint planning and commissioning.

A number of local public bodies including Cyngor Gwynedd are members of the Public Services Board and one of the three Well-being Objectives in the Gwynedd and Anglesey Well-being Plan 2023-2028 is 'We want to work together to support our services and communities to move towards Net Zero Carbon'.

7. Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and the Socio-Economic Duty

The impact of [Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and the Socio-Economic Duties](#) on the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan were assessed when it was adopted at a meeting of the Cabinet on 8 March 2022. This assessment is directly relevant to the Annual Report on the CNEP.

8. Next Steps

Having received comments from the Communities Scrutiny Committee, the report will be considered by the Council's Cabinet before a final version is published on the Council's website.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Results of Public Consultation on the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan

Atodiad 2 – Gwynedd Council's Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2022/23 – 2029/30:
Version 2