



A Strategy for Climate change

- Net positive Powys 2021-2030



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Foreword

We are facing a climate emergency. As a Council we need to act now to reduce direct and indirect carbon emissions to net zero. We also need to prepare and adapt to deal with the future impacts of climate change by ensuring that as a County, we become climate resilient.

To achieve this, over the next decade, we will radically rethink how we live, work, learn, play and invest in the county. We also need action, not only on a local level but regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Powys County Council in collaboration with our partners are proud to lead this transition. Working collaboratively with communities, partners, and other organisations, we will together meet the challenge of climate change and have the 'future that we choose'.

With a clear position on the need for transformative action, the strategy sets the framework for Powys Council to take action, building on Powys successes and challenges to date. This strategy sets the vision for where we need to be in 2030 and how we aim to achieve our goal of being net carbon zero by 2030. By achieving this goal, we believe that Powys will contribute to:

- ✓ **Tackling the climate emergency, we all face**
- ✓ **Cutting emissions by at least 95% in Wales by 2050**
- ✓ **Making the public sector in Wales net carbon zero by as outlined in Welsh Governments Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales delivery plan**

Although we are facing a climate emergency and the challenges and actions required by every individual will not be easy, we will also see this as an exciting opportunity to address the challenge through the delivery of warm homes, reducing inequalities, creating more places for our children to play, cleaner air, jobs and opportunities for all.

We recognise that achieving our vision will not be easy. The Council will need to show strong leadership to create opportunities for all to participate in the delivery and benefits of this change.

A Strategy for Climate change- Net positive Powys 2021-2030

Introduction

On September the 24th 2020 Powys County Council declared a climate emergency and agreed to a cross-party motion on climate change. This declaration showed the commitment and ambition Powys County Council has to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero, in line with the Welsh public sector target of 2030. This document builds on that declaration. **By formally declaring the emergency, the Council are saying that the work that we are doing to tackle climate change needs to grow and speed up.**

Powys council in collaboration with our partners is uniquely placed to lead the challenge of climate change, as it is recognised that we have a democratic mandate for action, proximity to citizens and a key strategic role in leading public, private and voluntary sector partners. As so, Powys Council and our partners are proud to lead this transition. Working collaboratively with our partners and influencing communities, and other organisations, we will together meet the challenge of climate change and have the 'future that we choose' set out our shared vision in this strategy. We also believe we have a responsibility as one of the largest local employers to lead by example and support the behaviour change needed.

Climate Change is close to home for many in Powys. We are already seeing increased extreme weather, especially flooding. With Covid, we have recently seen the need to act on science to address this emergency. Our recovery from covid provides us an opportunity to build back better, to have a green recovery.

In Wales the public sector has an ambition to not simply meet net zero by 2050 as the whole economy must, or by 2040 as many in the private sector but to take global responsibility seriously, we are looking to be net zero in the public sector by 2030. This is an ambitious aim and for good reason.

Acting on climate change saves lives. Action required needs to consider reducing our impact (mitigation) on the climate and therefore the damages we will see and responding to the risks (adaptation) of climate change to build climate stability and resilience.

We have already been on a long journey, making changes to support climate action plus delivering numerous projects that have already reduced our impact on the environment, however the current level of action is not enough to meet the challenges that we are faced with and the goals that we want to achieve.



Now is the time to increase awareness, change behaviours, join forces, and increase the pace of action.

We recognise the challenges and impacts of Climate change are different for citizens across Powys. 'We' as individuals; as a county need to unite and take action to tackle this climate emergency that we are facing, working alongside regional, and national stakeholders.

A key step change in this transition is behaviour, behaviour of individuals, communities, and businesses. Powys is unlikely to meet its vision and targets for reducing carbon emissions without a greater emphasis on behaviours which in turn will result in action and sustainability.





Why act on climate change? ?

The world's temperature is rising because of human activity, and climate change now threatens every aspect of life.

Climate and ecological change is the globally defining challenge of our time. It impacts all living things on Earth, including you and me.

Left unchecked, humans and nature will experience catastrophic warming with worsening droughts, greater sea level rise and mass extinction of species.

We face a huge challenge, but there are solutions.

Ambitious action on climate change saves lives. Climate change is a significant global issue with local impacts for everyone. Powys has already experienced extreme weather events including flooding and storm damage. These and other extreme events are also experienced globally and are making the news around the world.

Although we are already experiencing the negative impacts of climate change, we can still decide what our future looks like. Our actions today impact on both current and future generations.



THE URGENCY IS CLEAR



Powys communities have received national recognition for their ability to rally together, especially at a time of crisis. In the challenges that Covid-19 has brought, we have seen the positive results of communities working together. We are capable of meeting challenges. **Together we can restore our climate and rise to the challenge.**

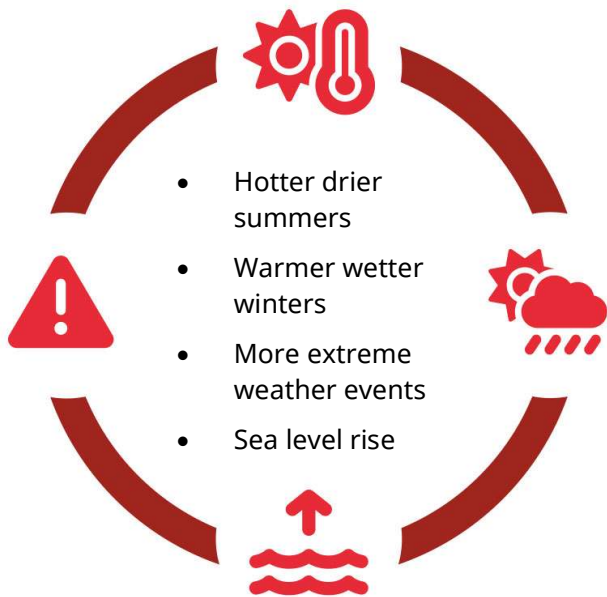
Some changes are already happening, though not at the pace and scale that will meet our carbon commitments. **Both the pace and scale of change must be increased on this collective journey to securing a sustainable future for the next generation.** Funding for the transition to net zero by local authorities is something the Welsh Government is currently investigating. Appropriate funding is relied upon to meet the scale and pace of change that is required to get to net zero by 2030.

The impacts of climate change for the future are dependent on the choices we make now. The next chapter of our collective journey on responding to climate change is one about what future we choose, by working together we can meet this even greater challenge.

Impacts of climate change

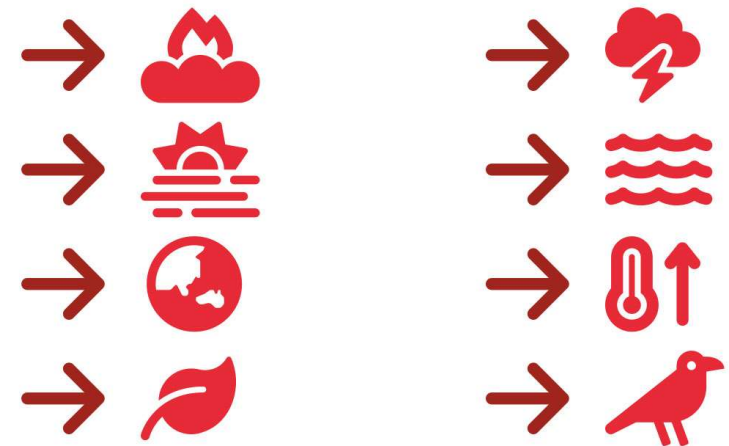
The rise in global temperature is causing our climate and our planet to change.

The impacts of climate change are:



The impacts of climate change cause:

- More drought and wildfire
- Stronger storms
- More heat waves
- Flooding
- Damaged corals
- Less snow and ice and the thawing of the permafrost
- Changes in plant life cycles
- Changes to animal migration and life cycles





What is climate change?

Climate is the average weather in a place over many years. Climate change is a shift in those average conditions. The rapid climate change we are now seeing is caused by humans using oil, gas and coal for their homes, businesses, and transport.

When fossil fuels burn, they release greenhouse gases- mostly carbon dioxide (CO₂). These gases trap the sun's heat and cause the planet's temperature to rise.

The world is now about 1.2C warmer than it was in the 19th Century and the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere has risen by 50%

Our Vision and Principles

Vision: In 2030 Powys County Council is carbon neutral and climate resilient.

We have collectively achieved a fair and inclusive transition, capturing the opportunities of new jobs and investment, improved health, wellbeing and education, and a better environment for local people. We are harnessing the power of nature and people working in balance and have a rich ecosystem and thriving green economy. We have contributed to a safer global climate.

This vision is supported by a number of key principles



Long Term

We are looking to 2030 in our plans and split this into three terms for ease of focus. We acknowledge in many workstreams, that looking through a longer-term lens identifies opportunity for earlier intervention.



Integration

The recent publication of “Net zero carbon status by 2030 A route map for decarbonisation across the Welsh public sector” has been fully utilised and the structure of this document includes the headings found there. Based on work with the Partnership Council for Wales and published by the Welsh Government. This plan also includes work on all six priority areas of the Mid Wales Energy Strategy and incorporates suggestions from the Powys Public Service Board’s draft work on creating a Carbon Positive Powys. Bringing together Regional, Sub-national and National workplans into one document.



Involvement

We meet every month as a cross party working group with member representatives from across the county to discuss climate change. We are using the place-based approach to not only increase involvement and innovation, but to understand and meet the needs of the diverse communities across our vast region. We have published information on climate change, why it matters, what the council is doing and how you can get involved on our website.



Collaborative

We are working across the council through our climate champions group and our steering group. We attend regional steering groups and are the regional representative on the decarbonisation strategy panel at the national level.



Prevention

The work on inclusion, engagement, involvement, education, skills and just transition all work towards the prevention sustainable development principle.

Underpinning these principles is 'A strategy that is fair to all' meaning outcomes will be fair, transformative, evidence-based, collaborative, and able to evolve in line with emerging technologies, changing individual and community behaviours, and new scientific findings. This means that the areas of climate action will support the County in securing wider benefits of social, economic, and environmental equality.

All people who live, work, learn and play in the County will be involved in the delivery of climate action. The action plans which will support the delivery of this Strategy and its outcomes will enable a transition for the county that is accessible and possible for all.

Below are some community-centred solutions which support wider social, economic, and environmental equality and are already in place.

- ✔ **Affordable warmth including addressing fuel poverty, projects listed in buildings section of action plan**
- ✔ **Zero Interest Loans Fund for energy efficiency and renewable energy**
- ✔ **New Ways of Working, including remote working, avoiding travel time and cost**
- ✔ **Digital Inclusion so the shift to digital can be inclusive, including rural broadband**
- ✔ **Public transport and Active Travel improve mobility, health, and address transport poverty**
- ✔ **Public EV Charging Infrastructure facilitate a continuous roll out of charging infrastructure**





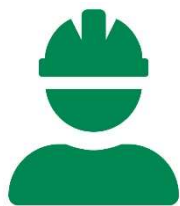
Taking action

The action that is needed to achieve our vision is complex and multi-faceted. The strategy details five key areas of change where climate action is needed to achieve the vision for Powys in 2030. Each of these five areas require clear plans and actions to ensure that we achieve our vision. These detailed, measurable plans will be completed during the next stage of the strategy and will draw on a wide range of guidance from local, regional, and national good practice advice.

Five key areas of change.

Below are the key areas of change which this strategy focuses on. Please note that these are high level areas and through the development of action plans and continued engagement they will evolve and be shaped by measurable outcomes.

These areas of change follow The publication – “Net zero carbon status by 2030 – A route map for decarbonisation across the Welsh Public Sector”. Through an engagement exercise we asked the residents of Powys how much they agreed that these five areas are suitable to support the goal of reaching net zero by 2030. We also asked them to prioritise the areas of focus and gave them the opportunity to share ‘what more can be done’ (See appendix 1 for suggestions via the public Engagement exercise). The following information is based on their feedback.



Buildings



Mobility and transport



Procurement



Land use and Agriculture



Council and governance



Buildings



Areas of focus

Benefits

Energy efficient housing

Deploy renewable energy where possible at our sites and in our buildings

21st century net zero schools

Use timber and other locally sourced/ available natural building materials where possible

- Lower energy bills
- Long term income from renewable energy
- Build local skills in refurbishment
- Provide local jobs
- Decrease climate and financial risk
- Demonstrating our commitment to climate action and inspiring others
- Reduce Fuel and Child Poverty



Mobility and transport

Areas of focus

Benefits

Work with Transport partners to improve transport infrastructure

Promote public transport

Reduce the need for travel - opportunities for remote working

Active travel options will allow residents to make more positive choices

Provide opportunities for the electrification of transport (including school transport)

- Avoid and lower transport cost
- Promote Healthier lifestyles and have healthier residents.
- More energy efficient travel options
- Increased electric charging points for all to use
- Saved transport time from remote working
- Lower Pollution levels in built up areas



| Areas of focus | Benefits |
|---|---|
| Build local supply chains and industries | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The circular economy principles reduce the need to spend |
| Help develop the circular economy in Powys | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More opportunities are found for the Council to meet its needs |
| New frameworks make the sustainable choice visible to decision makers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community benefits from procurement increased |
| Create opportunities for the use of more sustainable products and services to supply to the council. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demand for repairing helps create local skills which can service the wider community• More sustainable products being purchased for day-to-day needs |
| Innovative procurement to tackle climate change | |



| Areas of focus | Benefits |
|--|--|
| Understand the environmental impact on our land and the opportunities available | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We can measure climate impacts from our land• Protect land-based businesses, including agriculture, horticulture and forestry through climate resilience• Improved community health and wellbeing• Decreased flood risk |
| Support and encourage best practice including local sustainability and innovators. | |
| Give our local communities a voice to help express local preferences through place-based planning | |
| Encourage community groups to develop green spaces and other similar initiatives | |



Council and governance



Areas of focus

Benefits

Integrate emerging legislation and strategy plans from international to local - UN, UK, Wales, Mid Wales and Powys

Utilise best practice

Develop clear roles and responsibilities

Build on the inclusive governance and collaboration framework for Climate Action

Develop policies in support of climate action

Support communities with carbon positive initiatives

Provide training for our staff

Develop funding opportunities to support our transformation

- Gain the resources to enable the transition
- Compliance with a complex and evolving regulatory framework
- Be globally responsible
- Identifying more funding options in support of net zero
- Creating the environment for transformation
- Create a highly desirable place to live, learn, work and play.



Our Aims

To support the key areas of change and vision, we have identified some high-level key aims:

- ✓ To address climate change in a way consistent with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Being prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, globally responsible, vibrant culture and cohesive communities by embedding climate change at the heart of vision 2025.
- ✓ To work in partnership to overcome barriers to the development of renewable energy across the county for local energy networks and to promote the sustainable and appropriate use of renewable resources from air, land and water
- ✓ To maximise opportunities for carbon sequestration and minimise carbon release through the appropriate management of our natural resources.
- ✓ To raise awareness so that our communities can understand the options and benefits of the choices they can make.
- ✓ To maximise the benefits of Welsh Government, UK government and wider funding opportunities to deliver change, innovate and scale-up.
- ✓ To promote funding programmes and initiatives in support of renewable energy and other energy saving projects.
- ✓ To rise to the challenge of the climate emergency and create a climate conscious and resilient Powys.

Strategies and policies

There are a number of local, regional and national strategies and policies which have supported the development of this strategy. These include:

| Local | Regional | National |
|--|---|---|
| Powys County Councils Corporate Improvement Plan | Mid Wales Energy Strategy | The Climate Change Act (2008) |
| | | The Sixth Carbon budget (2020) |
| | | Wales Climate Targets and Carbon budgets (2021) |
| Public Service Board (PSB) climate change, step 7 – A carbon positive Powys. Which is part of the Towards 2040 – Powys PSB Well-being Plan. | Vision for Growing Mid Wales Strategic Economic Plan & Growth Deal Roadmap (May 2020) | The Climate Change Risk Assessment (2021) from the climate change committee |
| Brecon Beacons National Park Future Beacons | Public Service Board Draft Regional Strategy by AECOM. | UK Gov road to zero Industrial decarbonisation strategy |
| | | UK Gov Clean Air Strategy |
| Welsh Local Government Association | | UK Gov Clean Growth Strategy |
| Powys Climate strategy consultation | Public Service Board Draft Regional Strategy Technical Companion Report by AECOM. | The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution |
| Local Development Plan | | Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future. |



Delivery/next steps

This Strategy sets out Powys County Councils ambition and vision for transformation climate action. The journey for delivery will be detailed in a range of delivery plans, which will be engaged on and developed.

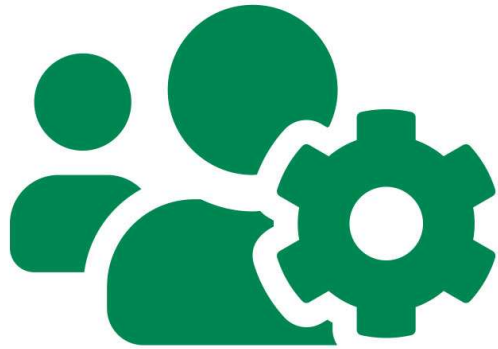
This strategy provides a framework for direct action by Powys County Council and will help us collaborate with our partners and influence our stakeholders across the county; what needs to come next is ACTION. We need to move from Strategy to Action immediately. Two key things are required to enable this, they are;

Committed and collaborative leadership to lead and influence Resource and capacity to deliver

These along with the key guiding principles will lay the foundation of action.

To support the journey of delivery the strategy and actions will follow the Welsh Governments route map for change as detailed below. This route map will provide a clear pathway to change.

The Journey to net zero



Moving up a gear - 2021-2022

Where understanding the context and what needs to be done is vital, and where action needs to accelerate



Well on our way - 2022-2026

Where there is an expectation that low carbon is becoming the norm and we are definitely on the way to a net zero Welsh public sector



Achieving our goal- 2026-2030

Where choosing zero carbon has become routine, culturally embedded, and self-regulating

Once detailed action plans have been developed and agreed the outcomes achieved will align to these three step changes under our five keys areas of change: Buildings, Mobility and transport, Procurement, Land use and Agriculture, and Council and Governance.

How we will monitor progress

An essential part of this strategy is monitoring and regular review. Once the Council has a county baseline along with detailed action plans, we will develop a robust monitoring framework to report on progress and outcomes. This will help us to understand which projects/actions work best, which provides the widest co-benefits, and which offer best value for money. The council's Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework will be followed in establishing the evaluation and monitoring of the strategy.

There are currently several Boards, such as the Climate Programme Board, Public Service Board, and the Cross-Party climate working group which the climate agenda sits. Their roles and responsibilities will need to be reviewed and we will need to ensure that there is an effective platform to drive, monitor and manage the counties Climate change journey. Key to this platform will be engagement and collaboration from our partners.

A Strategy for Climate change- Net positive Powys 2021-2030

The background of the entire slide is a dense, vibrant green wall of ivy leaves. The leaves are of various shades of green, from bright lime to deep forest green, and are arranged in a natural, overlapping pattern. In the top-left corner, there is a white rectangular box with rounded corners containing the text 'Closing statement'. In the center, there is a large white speech bubble with rounded corners and a tail pointing towards the bottom-left, containing three paragraphs of text. The text is in a dark green color, matching the background foliage.

Closing statement

When we chose the path of listening to the climate science and proactively acting in a strategic way, **we see that the solutions to climate change are so often the solution to other hurdles.**

From affordable warmth to flood resistance, from energy efficiency to creating space for nature, these solutions and many more “multisolve”. Tackling climate change is a key part of transformation, a transformation which will affect us all and requires us all to embrace.

Through this vision we will save lives, improve livelihoods, and offer a realistic and aspirational vision of sustainable living in Powys for all.

Appendix 1

Below are a sample of suggestions of *'what more can be done'* gathered via the Strategies public engagement exercise. Please note that the comments below are a sample.

| Buildings - What more can we do? Areas to consider for our action plans | |
|--|--|
| What about planning? Could more be done in the assessment of applications against the targets for net zero and natures recovery? | Work with Welsh Government to alter the subsidy land owners already receive to produce food, to focus more on land management to maximise opportunities for carbon sequestration and promote more biodiversity and places for nature. |
| Sell off more public buildings to simply reduce your corporate footprint and use recycled materials in construction and refurbished office furniture etc | Integration and scale are really important. Linking in with maintenance work and making sure work is done at a big enough scale to meet the challenge of net zero and at a pace which meets net zero by 2030. |
| Look to provide energy for council buildings that can also be used in nearby homes. | Promote net zero for all new building in private sector via planning etc |
| only use materials available within the County. | sustainable planning of community areas |
| provide relevant support for educating in key areas of need to meet the energy efficient housing by creating green jobs and developing a greener workforce. | Sustainable food production - of healthy, nutritious affordable food, and de-intensifying farming, creating shorter supply chains as local as possible |
| Give consideration to restoring and repairing buildings as an alternative to new build. | Working to inform Powys residents of the actions they can take personal responsibility for and facilitating these |
| Free up plots for self-builders with strong eco plans | Sustainable planning of community areas |
| A focus on lobbying for further reflections of the climate emergency in owner occupied housing - building regulations etc | Given the old building stock in our town centres, I think we should have a programme of carbon footprinting businesses and shops and provide support to better insulate these buildings and instal other energy efficiency measures. |
| Industrial units and agricultural buildings - better regulation, education and monitoring regarding environmental impacts re pollution | provide training and help for local people to set up businesses to build energy-efficient buildings and carry out renewable energy retrofitting at an affordable rate for all to be able to improve the public's ability to be more energy efficient |

Mobility and Transport - What more can we do? Areas to consider for our action plans

| | |
|--|--|
| Low-cost public transport to reduce car usage | Promote the development of alternative fuels such as hydrogen |
| Introduce small scale wind and solar generation to all Powys Carparks to subsidise the use of more charging points. | Support the re-opening of railway lines |
| Safer Cycling - Cycle lanes | The creation of subsidised carpools with up-to-date vehicles. |
| Affordable and available public transport, rural areas are forced to rely on cars due to very limited public transport availability | Reward and incentivise car and lift share; rationalise parking - do not insist on unnecessary parking spaces for new planning applications |
| Increase access to footpaths by better signing | Join up public transport- eg buses go to and stops at train stations. |
| Investigate further the concept of "20-minute neighbourhood" - i.e. provide as many services as possible within a 20 minute walk, including shopping, recreation and work. | Subsidise and increase the availability and spread of public transport - if more people can use it, they will be enabled and empowered to make a lasting change. |
| Safer Walking - Pavements | Charging network for electric vehicles |
| Transport partners to work closely with providers of essential services to provide transport plans to the essentials. Including active travel, public transport, shared mobility, and mobility hubs | Optional extra a tenner a month bus pass from each household on their council tax bills. |
| Provide support for the uptake of e-bikes, e-cargo bikes and adapted cycles | Reduce the speed limit on country roads, which will lessen pollution and make the roads safer for different modes of transport |
| Implement 20mph limits in built up areas to increase safety for people walking, wheeling and cycling | Improve and reinstate footpaths, bridleways, and cycleways in rural areas to link homes to villages and towns to support Active Travel options |
| Promote locally produced food so the distance to market is shorter | Better broadband would help reduce travel, increase education and availability to those not IT enabled |

Procurement - What more can we do? Areas to consider for our action plans

| | |
|---|---|
| Minimum environmental impact should be given weight in procurement | Focus on reducing the need, prior to sourcing the products. |
| Encourage and enable the growing of more plant based foods in the county, especially fruit, vegetables and oats. | Food from local farmers |
| Make sure that local foods are used in School dinners and County Council refreshment areas as much as possible | Enabling Local Markets at community centres or schools |
| Make the right policies first to build the business case for circular and sustainable economy in Powys. Have strict criteria on what can't be purchased i.e very polluting products or high carbon products. | Creating localised buying club to overcome the issues of value for money and be prepared to break down contract sizes as Powys has no supplier giants able to compete. |
| Carbon audit on all procurement decision making | Support and encourage responsible procurement by others |
| Make sure all your contracts are accessible locally by local suppliers and providers. Keep the money we pay to Powys in Powys for the benefit of Powys people. | Help the public to be able to choose more sustainable products at a price we can afford ie. not more expensive than current non-environmentally friendly products and packaging |
| Development of guidance, tools and training for procurement professionals to support low carbon decisions | Emphasise to decision makers how important making the most sustainable choices is |
| Carbon audit on all procurement decision making | Purchase food from local suppliers in all council buildings/schools |

Land use and Agriculture - What more can we do? Areas to consider for our action plans

| | |
|---|--|
| Nature recovery to increase biodiversity | Education of our environment and its impact needs to be better delivered to schools and communities |
| Focus on supporting upland farmers and landowners to increase soil carbon and thus soil water storage capacity through improved grazing/pasture management - important for carbon sequestration | Providing the tools to deliver on best practice and lead on local sustainability and innovation. |
| The promotion of agroforestry (planting trees amongst crops) in the local area should be a top priority to combat soil degradation. | I would like to a focus on financial support for farmers to move away from sheep and poultry farming, so that land can be used for activities that promote carbon sequestration (eg tree-planting), reduce agricultural carbon footprints and river pollution, and promote the expansion of biodiversity |
| Council farms to be net zero by default | more supportive of the Welsh Government's targets on phosphate levels in rivers. |
| Encourage and facilitate tree planting and local water retention | - Reduce the need to, for example, remove hedgerows, trees, wild areas - add to them instead |
| All hill tops should be covered in trees to reduce erosion and flooding downhill. | Support Community groups (via funding etc) to create strong localised services and opportunities. |
| Encourage local food growing initiatives to build food security, supporting organic and regenerative agriculture. | Support those who want to convert land in Powys to horticulture, especially the younger generation who lack access to suitable land. |
| We want to see every public owned land being used for people and nature (greenspaces used for sustainable urban drainage, native street trees and new woodlands, wildflowers everywhere, support plans for beaver reintroductions, stop using pesticides | Plant native woodlands, food forests and agroforestry, transfer land management to local communities. |
| Buy unused/unsustainably used land for use by sustainable community projects | Alternative business model for livestock farmers, producing different crops, sequestering carbon, and generating energy |

Appendix 2

Glossary/definitions

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Net Positive | Net Positive is a way of doing business which puts back more into society, the environment, and the global economy than it takes out. |
| Climate resilient | The ability to prepare for, recover from, and adapt to climate change. |
| Ecosystems | The ecosystem is the structural and functional unit of ecology where the living organisms interact with each other and the surrounding environment. In other words, an ecosystem is a chain of interaction between organisms and their environment. |