

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Assistant Director - Place
to South Ayrshire Council
of 1 October 2020**

Subject: Climate Change Policy

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the work undertaken since the approval of the Council's Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy in 2019. The Sustainable Development and Climate Change Member Officer Working Group was established to consider implementation of the strategy and the Council's response to national obligations.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:

2.1.1 formally aligns with national targets by adopting a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 (based on our 2014/15 baseline) and a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045;

2.1.2 supports the delivering of these targets by agreeing to set a carbon budget for 2021/22;

2.1.3 adopts a 3 strand policy for buildings which sets out net zero standards for:

(i) existing buildings;

(ii) buildings or renovations in progress; and

(iii) future buildings;

2.1.4 requests officers to bring forward proposals for electric charging infrastructure to be considered as part of the budget process for 2021/22 onwards; and

2.1.5 agrees that the Council's recovery from COVID-19 should be strategically focused on a green recovery to tackle the climate emergency and deliver a low carbon future.

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2019, the Council adopted its first Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy. The strategy aimed to further reduce the Councils greenhouse gas emissions, adapt the Council to the already locked in changes we are seeing and will continue to see in the climate locally and globally, and to show local leadership on climate change, working with our communities to make a difference.
- 3.2 In the same year the Scottish Government also adopted more stringent targets, to become net zero by 2045 and to reduce emissions by 75% by 2030, and declared a climate and ecological emergency.
- 3.3 The Council's strategy set out a range of actions over a 5 year period to allow the Council to develop its approach to sustainable development and climate change in a targeted and progressive science based way. This was intended to develop an increased understanding of both the Council baseline and the South Ayrshire Community wide baseline, and the necessary actions, timelines and costs involved to achieve the scale of change required.
- 3.4 The Annual Climate Change Duty report was approved by Leadership Panel in November 2019 recommending the development of service specific targets through the Member Officer Working Group (MOWG) for consideration by the Budget Working Group. The MOWG is was established, chaired by the Leader of the Council, to consider recommendations from the Climate Duty report and ensure delivery of the Climate Change strategy. The MOWG has now met three times and considered a range of key issues with recommendations developed and proposed for approval within this report.

4. Proposals

National Emissions Targets

- 4.1 Following consideration of reports and discussions the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Member Officer Working Group propose that a stronger strategic position requires to be adopted at this stage to allow officers to undertake further work and deliver more ambitiously against this agenda. The recommendations contained in this report set the strategic direction of the Council in more detail than established within our 2019 strategy.
- 4.2 Therefore it is proposed to formally adopt the national targets of reducing our emissions by 75% by 2030 with net zero emissions by 2045 (Against the 2014/15 baseline). In the last year that data is available, 2018/19, our emissions were 20,282 tCO₂e which has shown steady decline over recent years. Further information will be brought forward as more detailed delivery actions and proposals are developed within this strategic framework. These will be tracked and monitored via the PENTANA action plan for the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy. The action plan will be presented to the next MOWG for discussion.

Carbon Accounting

- 4.3 Recommendations laid before parliament last month mean that all public bodies will be required to state when they will become net zero by, and to set annual targets to ensure the delivery of that goal. Formally aligning to the national targets is the first step in this journey for our Council, and it could be argued that this is now the minimum commitment the Council should make with regard to targets in order to be fulfilling its climate change duties as set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.
- 4.4 To provide a considered incremental approach to reducing the Council's within boundary emissions in line with the required targets, a structured framework is required. Adoption of a carbon budgeting approach can help the Council to explore in more detail our current baseline and trends and target action.
- 4.5 At Aberdeenshire Council an annual carbon budget figure is set each year and reduced incrementally to keep the Council on track for 75% by 2030 and net zero by 2045. The budget is apportioned to services in the same way that the financial budget is apportioned and savings are planned, projected and allocated. It is proposed that the Council adopts and applies this approach learning from colleagues at Aberdeenshire Council, with the first year of implementation being 2021/22.

Net Zero Buildings

- 4.6 Reducing emissions from the public sector built estate to zero between now and 2045 will be critical to achieving national targets. With appropriate planning, our built estate can steadily and systematically support the required levels of reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that national targets will require local authorities and other public sector bodies to deliver between now and 2030 and 2045.
- 4.7 Legislatively required building standards and our rate of replacement and renewal of existing assets are not sufficient alone to deliver the step change needed. While at present the Council only require to meet existing legislative standards for each asset, this is not sufficient cumulatively in relation to our climate change duties or delivery of the national targets.
- 4.8 Furthermore, it has been indicated that where the public sector do not meet the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions required voluntarily then further legislation will be introduced to ensure this in future years. It is acknowledged leaving full compliance with the targets for future later years would lead to mounting future costs for significant refurbishments and replacements as deadlines came closer. This would ultimately intensively require both financial and other resource investments at later dates between both now and 2030 and now and 2045 in order to meet national targets.
- 4.9 Leaving such investments to later would also mean that the benefits of lower running costs and reduced operational emissions in the interim would not be gained. The Council is also now considering its asset base as we develop a new operating model in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and a shift to agile working from an office based environment.

- 4.10 Given the above a measured three point approach was agreed by the Member Officer Working Group, which will align our corporate estate with the national targets taking account of our current portfolio with what will be required in the future. This is an ambitious yet realistic approach which follows best practice from other public sector bodies. This will provide a staged and incremental approach to investment over the long term in the change required to deliver a net zero future.

Small Fleet Electrification

- 4.11 The Programme for Government 2019-20 indicated that all small vehicles within the public sector fleet should be electric or ultralow emission by 2025, with large vehicles by 2030. As such this will require a step change in our work in this area, going beyond external funding of both vehicles and charge points, which has funded our work to date.
- 4.12 Initial development work suggests that around £1.8 million investment in electric charging infrastructure will be required to support the electrification of the small fleet. There will be external funding opportunities available to support this work, however it is likely that the Council will be required to allocate significant capital funding to deliver a programme of this scale. It is recommended that officers bring forward proposals to be considered as part of the budget process for 2021 onwards to ensure the Council is able to meet the 2025 target.
- 4.13 This will align with development of the Council's Fleet Strategy, approved at Leadership Panel on 17 March 2020 and similarly to the Council's building portfolio, consider the Council's future operating model in a post Covid-19 world.

Green Recovery

- 4.14 It is clear that recovery from COVID-19 has significantly impacted on the starting point from which we need to work to deliver against the climate and ecological emergency as a Council. In some areas it has advanced our progress, in others it has presented further challenges. It is clear, however, that to recover from COVID-19 in a robust way all our recovery actions need to be viewed through a climate emergency response lens. Green recovery is a key themes championed by the Scottish Government and COSLA, and this is further emphasised in the recently published Programme for Government which picks up on the importance of sustainable green jobs and innovation amongst other themes.
- 4.15 As such, it is proposed that the Council's overarching strategies must ensure that their vision, aims and objectives address the green recovery to ensure all developed actions supports the Council's ambitions in tackling the climate emergency. The Sustainable Development and Climate Change Member Officer Working Group will consider further proposals for the integration within the Council's strategic framework as well as opportunities to embed within the values and behaviours of the organisation.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The recommendations in this report are required to ensure delivery of our legal requirements set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and subsequent guidance, in particular recent amendments to the Council's reporting requirements.

5.2 The recommendations in this report are consistent with procurement requirements.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Meeting our legal obligations in relation to climate change will undoubtedly require investment and changes to the way in which we deploy our resources. The recommendations set out in this report are intended to help the Council to meet requirements in a way which is planned and structured, recognising the financial costs but striving to meet them in the most resource efficient way possible.

6.2 The full costs of becoming net zero carbon are not known at this point, and many variables, including technology and energy prices, will change over the period between now and 2030 and 2045. The Council will seek and pursue external funding opportunities where possible, however it is important for the Council to be aware that investments from within the Council's own budgets will also be required.

6.3 Initial development work suggests that around £1.8 million will be required to provide electric charging infrastructure to deliver an electric small fleet by 2025. This will be considered as part of the budget process for 2021/22 onwards and external funding opportunities explored to reduce the cost to the Council.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

8.2.1 The risks associated with rejecting the recommendations are that the Council will not be able to meet its climate change duties, the Council will not be climate ready and the Council will incur further costs to address this, both in terms of ongoing energy use but also in terms of being required to then address these issues later.

8.2.2 Rejecting the recommendations may increase the financial burden on the Council.

9. Equalities

9.1 Climate Change is an equalities issue. Those who suffer the most from inequalities are likely to also suffer the most from the effects of climate change. It is critical that climate change is tackled in order to address inequality.

9.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been carried out on the proposals contained in this report, which identifies potential positive and negative equality impacts and any required mitigating actions. The EQIA is attached as [Appendix 1](#).

10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 The proposals contained within this report are part of the further delivery of the Council's Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy. They are intended to support the delivery of sustainable development and enable change which will positively impact across the range of environmental factors considered through the strategic environmental assessment process.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute across all of the Council's strategic objectives and outcomes.

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 The content of this report is a result of consultation and development with the Council's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Member Officer Working Group and with Councillor Ian Cochrane, Portfolio Holder for Environment, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

- 14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Assistant Director - Place will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Leadership Panel in the 'Council and Leadership Panel Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Promote approved national targets internally and externally, include on website	31 October 2020	Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services
Prepare a carbon budget for 2021 and report to Council	31 March 2021	Head of Finance and ICT/ Assistant Director - Place
Develop a net zero policy for our buildings that considers 1 Existing buildings 2 Buildings or renovations in progress 3 Future buildings and report to Leadership	30 June 2021	Assistant Director - Place

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Panel		
Develop proposals for electric charging infrastructure to be included in the 2021/22 budget process	31 December 2020	Service Lead – Neighbourhood Services/ Head of Ayrshire Roads Alliance

Background Papers **Report to Leadership Panel of 11 June 2020 – [Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy](#)**

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Date: 24 September 2020

1. Policy details

Policy Title Climate Change Policy	Lead Officer Kenny Dalrymple
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2. Which communities, groups of people, employees or thematic groups do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? Please indicate whether these would be positive or negative impacts

Community, Groups of People or Themes	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
The whole community of South Ayrshire	No	Yes
People from different racial groups, ethnic or national origin.	No	Yes
Women and/or men (boys and girls)	No	Yes
People with disabilities	No	Yes
People from particular age groups for example Older people, children and young people	No	Yes
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people	No	Yes
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process to change sex	No	Yes
Pregnant women and new mothers	No	Yes
People who are married or in a civil partnership	No	Yes
People who share a particular religion or belief	No	Yes
Thematic Groups: Health, Human Rights, Rurality and Deprivation.	No	Yes

3. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that the policy will support the Council to:

General Duty and other Equality Themes	Level of Negative and/or Positive Impact (high, medium or low)
Eliminate discrimination and harassment faced by particular communities or groups	Low
Promote equality of opportunity between particular communities or groups	Low
Foster good relations between particular communities or groups	Low
Promote positive attitudes towards different communities or groups	Low
Increase participation of particular communities or groups in public life	Low
Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or groups	Low
Promote the human rights of particular communities or groups	Low
Tackle deprivation faced by particular communities or groups	Low

4. Summary Assessment

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (A full EIA must be carried out on all high and medium impact policies)		YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rationale for decision: This policy will reduce carbon emissions produced by the Council in line with climate change goals set by the Scottish Government which will benefit the whole of South Ayrshire.			
Signed :	Kevin Carr	Assistant Director	
Date:	22 September 2020	Copy to equalities@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	