



REPORT TO: MORAY COUNCIL ON 10 MARCH 2021

SUBJECT: CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2020 - 2030

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks the agreement of the Council to adopt the Climate Change Strategy for 2020-2030.
- 1.2 The report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section II (13) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the approval of Council Reports and Strategies of a corporate nature including Local Development and Housing Plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Council:-

- i) approves and adopts the Climate Change Strategy 2020 -2030 in APPENDIX 1, subject to delegation to the Head of Economic Growth and Development to amend and publish the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan as outlined in Section 5 and in consultation with the Chair of the Climate Change Working Group;
- ii) approves current draft action plan in APPENDIX 2 noting the further developments proposed in this report and noting the need for further development work for key actions in relation to hydrogen, buildings and transport;
- iii) approves the budget and staffing resources proposals, in summary
 - Revenue budget of £20,000
 - Staffing budget of £164,746 (subject to job evaluation);
- iv) notes a request for a consultancy budget as set out in paragraph 7.8 is to be submitted through the Transformation funding review process;

- v) **agrees that the Head of Economic Growth and Development reports progress to the appropriate Council Committee on a 6 monthly basis;**
- vi) **agrees to embed Climate Change and Biodiversity considerations within Council/Committee reports through the inclusion of a dedicated paragraph in the Summary of Implications with effect from August 2021, once staffing is in post;**
- vii) **agrees that the actions for 2021/2022 are added to service performance reports and included in individual service plans at the next review point; and**
- viii) **notes the proposed next steps contained within Section 8.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Climate change is the biggest challenge that we face in our lifetime and for future generations. There is clear scientific evidence that change is accelerating quicker than expected and action is needed now to combat the direct and current impact and to agree a pathway for a sustainable future.
- 3.2 On the 27 of June 2019 the Council made a Climate Emergency Declaration which recognised that climate change is an ecological emergency, and the Council needs to be serious about taking necessary actions to protect our area, country and planet (para 6 of the Minute refers).
- 3.3 The draft strategy is the response to commitments made in the declaration, specifically:
 - That the strategy will set a goal of being carbon neutral by 2030 and that the Council, its officers and members will work with others across Moray to deliver that goal.
- 3.4 The agreed approach to be taken as per the stated Vision of the Strategy, namely that it aims to achieve the following:
 - Supporting a just transition to a low carbon economy;
 - A carbon neutral Council by 2030 with an ongoing reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the Council area as a whole (from homes and business);
 - Ensure the Council, and its partners, are better prepared to deal with the current and future impacts/consequences of climate change;
 - Work to retain, protect and enhance biodiversity across Moray;
 - Identify on-going activity that contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation and develop new policy and actions to address any gaps in our approach;
 - Embed climate change mitigation and adaptation action throughout the organisation to ensure it becomes integral to the operation of the Council;

- Ensure the climate change agenda is acknowledged in departmental service planning and integrated into Council decision-making processes;
 - Seek to have the strategy endorsed by the community partners with commitments to joint action where possible; and
 - Work pro-actively with the wider community to promote and facilitate local action on Climate Change.
- 3.5 Since June 2019, members of the Council's Climate Change Group (which has included cross-party member representation) worked together to develop a draft Climate Change Strategy. The strategy has taken account of the environmental, economic and social aspects of climate change and sustainability and also provides a strategic direction for the Council to follow over the next 10 years.
- 3.6 At its meeting on 2 September 2020 Moray Council (para 7 of Minute refers) agreed:-
- i. the draft Climate Change Strategy 2020-30 in **APPENDIX 1** for public consultation and engagement from 3 September to 30 October 2020;
 - ii. to note the draft Action Plan in **APPENDIX 2** which gives an early indication of the actions currently proposed to implement the strategy, noting that these require further development and to be reviewed in light of the consultation feedback on the strategy itself; and
 - iii. to note that a final Strategy and Action Plan would be presented to Council on 20 January 2021.
- 3.7 It is important to note that due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and its related work pressures on Council operations, the ongoing development of the Strategy and Action Plan has been detrimentally impacted. A revised development timeline, proposing a revised committee date of 10 March 2021, was provided to the Climate Change working group in November 2020, and approved, but due to Covid pressures neither the strategy nor the current action plan are yet in their final format. Rather than delay approval of these documents further however, as is set out in more detail below, it is proposed that authority to make the final (limited) adjustments to the strategy is delegated allowing publication later in the year, with the action plan recognised as the current version of a document which will continue to be developed.

4. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The public consultation on the Moray Council draft Climate Change Strategy took place over an 8-week period from 4 September to 30 October 2020.
- 4.2 The consultation of the strategy centred around 3 key strands:
- Public Consultation;
 - Online Webinars; and
 - Children & Young People Survey.

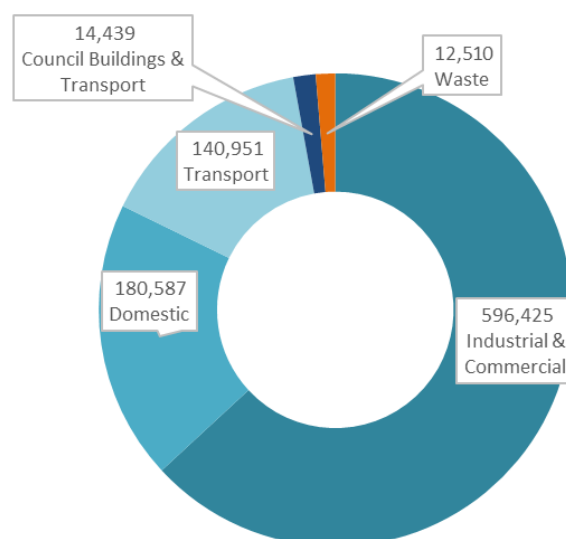
- 4.3 An overarching Executive Summary report (**APPENDIX 3A**), together with more detailed individual Feedback Analysis reports for each strand, was prepared and submitted to the Climate Change Working Group for consideration, which has informed the ongoing development of the Strategy.
- 4.4 The consultation also included a request for suggestions for additional actions, which could be considered. These have been collated and considered by the working group, and responses to each suggestion provided in the associated report. (**APPENDIX 3B**)
- 4.5 Key themes and feedback from the consultation are:
- 60% of respondents agreed that the strategy captured the key climate change and sustainability related issues and challenges faced in Moray;
 - 65% of respondents agreed that the ambitions of the draft vision and vision statement for Moray met their expectations;
 - 71% of respondents considered the draft actions to be suitable in addressing the identified issues; and
 - 70% of respondents agreed with the proposed Council approach to ensure a "Just Transition" to a low carbon economy.
- 4.6 From the Children & Young People survey:
- 92% have heard about Climate Change (CC) and know either a lot or a bit about the subject;
 - 87% believe that CC is happening, 2% do not;
 - 51% are very worried or fairly worried by CC;
 - 57% thought their school was very good or good at helping the environment, 30% neither good nor bad, 8% bad or very bad;
 - To the statement "All schools should be encouraging and helping pupils like me to do things to help the environment", 95% agreed a lot or a bit; and
 - 70% thought their school should be generating renewable energy.
- 4.7 Strong feedback was received on the need:
- for community leadership and collaboration;
 - to act quickly; and
 - for climate change to be reflected across policies including planning and Economic Development.

This feedback reflects the view emerging nationally, that local authorities have a vital role in leading local efforts on climate change.

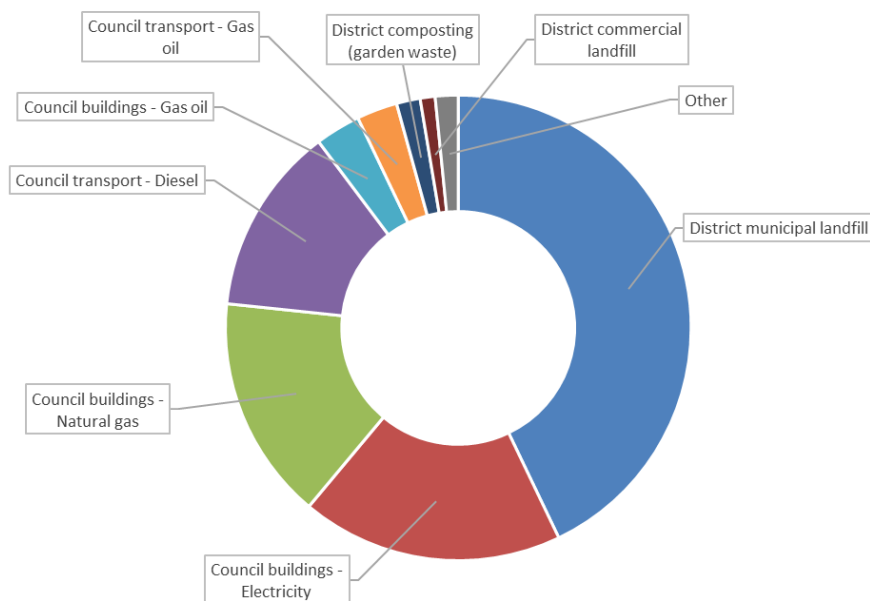
There was a common theme on communication, education and awareness raising, including provision of information in formats that can be understood by all residents. In response to this request, an "easy-read" version of the Strategy will also be made available, in conjunction with the updating of the Strategy for ongoing policy updates (ref Section 5).

- 4.8 Across all consultation strands, there was a clear request for the Strategy to go further when it comes to the wider community. Not that the council should do everything, but rather for the Council to help others to help themselves, through leadership, education, empowerment, encouragement etc. This request has been supported by the working group and has been taken account of in the ongoing development of the Strategy.
- 4.9 In particular, it is worthy to note that tsiMORAY launched Moray's Climate Assembly on the 4 February 2021, to highlight existing, and stimulate new activity in Moray to tackle climate change. Moray Council were represented at both Member and Officer level at the initial meeting and will continue to work with the Assembly moving forward.
- 4.10 Consultants were commissioned in December 2020 to provide an updated carbon emissions inventory and assessment tool for Moray, with work completing in February 2021. This updated information has been incorporated into the Climate Change Strategy document and details a refined accurate evaluation of the extent and origin of carbon emissions within Moray for varying sectors, and for the Council for service provision and energy.
- 4.11 The tool will be updated on an ongoing basis and will be used as a key monitoring and reporting tool throughout the life of the Strategy. Additionally, it will allow graphics of varying designs to be produced periodically, suitable for a variety of audiences, including residents and businesses. Examples of the resulting data are given below:

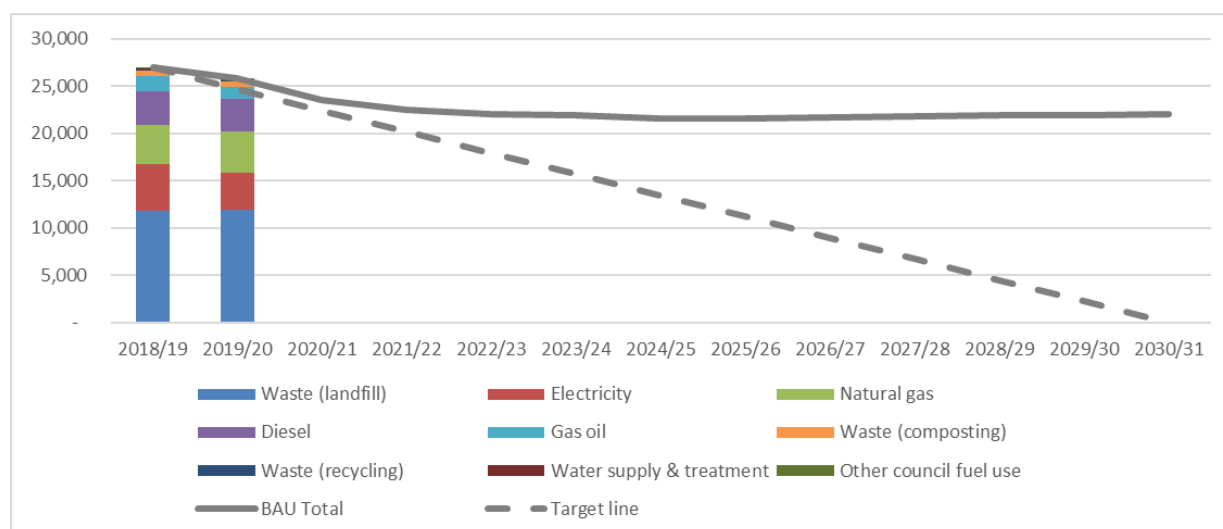
Emission sources Moray Council Area 2018 (excluding LULUCF), with Council contribution for buildings, transport and waste separated out.



Breakdown of Council emissions into component parts highlights the majority of emissions (>90%) arise from waste, buildings and transport.



Performance of Moray Council in 2018/19 and 2019/20 together with the Business-as-Usual projection with a linear projection from 2019 to 2030 highlighting the notional pathway required to meet the net zero target.



4.12 The final strategy has been revised to reflect the strong feedback from the public consultation which includes providing greater emphasis on:-

- A commitment to providing leadership in Climate Change through education, empowerment and encouragement;

- Recognise the role of the community and business in addressing climate change issues;
- Working collaboratively where appropriate to achieve wider benefits in meeting climate change targets across Moray;
- Updating the graphics and data and baseline information associated with the carbon inventory and emissions data tool; and
- Developing additional action identified in Appendix 3b relating to active travel.

5. POLICY AND DATA UPDATE

5.1 In December 2020, the Scottish Government published the following;

- Climate Change Plan Update: the roadmap for 2018–2032, which included 100 new policies and proposals to support Scotland’s green recovery and help deliver a just transition to net zero.
- Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan: setting out a pathway for the reorientation of the skills system, and signals the role that businesses, communities and individuals across Scotland will play in achieving this.
- Hydrogen Policy Statement: along with accompanying research: the Scottish Hydrogen Assessment Report, the report of the study into Deep Decarbonisation Pathways for Scottish Industries (considering hydrogen and electrification) and the Scottish Offshore Wind to Green Hydrogen Opportunity Assessment.

5.2 In January 2021, the Scottish Government published the following:

- Draft Heat in Buildings Strategy which encompasses updates to the 2018 Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map and 2015 Heat Policy Statement.

5.3 In January 2021, Adaptation Scotland published a new climate projections summary, which provides an overview for Scotland of the most up to date UK Met Office Climate Projections.

5.4 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and indicate Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS) – In September 2020, the Council approved an iRSS which is a new statutory requirement and will feed into NPF4 when it is published in autumn 2021. NPF4 and the iRSS have a strong focus upon carbon reduction and the iRSS highlights a number of strategic land use opportunities including a hydrogen corridor in Moray, opportunities for extensive woodland planting and peatland restoration as well as a network of 20-minute neighbourhoods encouraging less car usage in preference to walking, cycling and public transport for people to access most of their daily needs.

5.5 The Strategy has been revised to reflect these policy updates where possible. However, because these significant policies are recent and ongoing, it is proposed to review the strategy to ensure each update links properly and amend these where necessary. This work would also incorporate the development and production of an easy-read version of the Strategy.

- 5.6 Due to the uncertainties of Covid, it is proposed that the review of the Strategy will be undertaken by August 2021. It is highlighted that this review does not impinge on the approval of the Strategy nor the commencement of work in this area.

6. DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

- 6.1 The initial phase has been to develop a corporate Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. Upon approval of the Strategy, going forward Phase 1 of delivery will include embedding climate change across the Council, implementing those actions that can be accommodated within existing resources, appointment of additional staff and appointment of specialist consultants as detailed later in this report. Phase 2 will consider the consultants recommendations and resources for implementing further transformational climate change measures.
- 6.2 Consideration has been given to the resources required to achieve the ambitions of the strategy. The nature of climate change action and activity means it is cross cutting: it will feature heavily in NPF4 and deal with land use, strategic energy plans, building standards and strategic transport issues and economic opportunities.
- 6.3 In line with consultation feedback (Section 4.4), that the Strategy should include the wider aspects associated with reducing carbon in the community and across Moray, it is recognised that structure and resources need to be redefined appropriately to support this.
- 6.4 It is therefore proposed that responsibility for the Climate Change Strategy should be with the Head of Economic Growth and Development within the Strategic Planning and Development team.
- 6.5 For the Strategic Planning and Development team to lead and co-ordinate implementation and monitoring of the Climate Change Strategy and additional associated work (relating to indicative Regional Spatial Strategy, Land Use, Carbon conscious masterplans, Hydrogen Strategy, NPF4 requirements e.g. 20-minute neighbourhoods), community engagement on climate change and local heat and energy efficiency strategies, a budget of £20k would be required for communications, materials, and project development; and 3 permanent staff consisting Principal Officer (Grade 11), Project Officer (Grade 9) Project Officer (Grade 8) with the roles as described below (subject to job descriptions and job evaluation procedures).
- Principal Officer grade 11 - Climate Change - overall strategy implementation, monitoring and lead for CC across the Council, specialist input to large projects and lead on large CC project e.g., hydrogen corridor, reporting to Council, CPP, will liaise closely with Housing and Property and other services across the Council supporting the culture change needed to embed CC. Will link with Development Planning in terms of Regional Spatial Strategy, 20-minute neighbourhoods, Community Wealth Building, LDP policies, Carbon conscious Masterplans.

- Project Officer grade 9 - assist Principal with strategy delivery and monitoring, will lead on smaller scale projects in the Strategy, research and analysis this will include assisting other service areas in developing their projects and action delivery.
 - Project Officer grade 8 - monitoring, funding applications, awareness raising, partner and community relationships, communications, digital media, some research and analysis- the outreach aspect trying to change behaviours and co-ordinate the wide range of targeted awareness raising that is taking place, will link into wide network of organisations working on climate change, information exchange, keeping strong communications presence through digital media.
- 6.6 Recruitment of the Principal Officer would commence as quickly as possible, with recruitment of the Project Officer posts following shortly thereafter, allowing the new Principal Officer an opportunity to be involved in recruiting the team.
- 6.7 In addition, services across the Council will have to proactively deliver on the actions assigned to them in the climate change strategy where this is to be done in existing resources, with support from the CC team.
- 6.8 If the draft Climate Change Strategy is approved, other key strategic plans will require review and climate change actions added where appropriate. The main plans that fall into this category include:
- Local Development Plan 2025
 - Local Housing Strategy 2019-2024
 - Departmental Management Plans
 - Service Plans per individual service.
- 6.9 All climate change actions that are relevant to individual services that are to be initiated in 2021/22 will be added to existing Service Plans at the next review point and meantime tracked through the Pentana performance monitoring and reporting software and reported in service performance reports.

7. ACTION PLAN

- 7.1 Due to the overarching nature of climate change and how it impacts on all aspects of the council's operation, co-operation and input has been sought across all services to discuss and agree actions. The implementation of the Action Plan will require to be appropriately phased and integrated over the period of the strategy with further actions coming on-stream as scoping and preparatory work is progressed. Consideration to other council priorities and workstreams will be undertaken on an on-going basis to ensure that efficiencies, both financial and operational, are realised wherever possible.
- 7.2 It should be recognised that there are many variables which have the potential to impact upon the delivery of the Action Plan, including external factors such

as funding programmes, timescales, technology development, service delivery, amongst others.

- 7.3 Action descriptor forms are being completed for all actions to ensure all necessary information, in line with SMART objectives, is captured to permit ongoing assessment using Pentana.
- 7.4 The Action Plan contained in **APPENDIX 2** has been updated to reflect the proposed Climate Change Team staffing structure and identifies which actions will be delivered by the Climate Change Team and which reside with individual services, as summarised below

<u>Service Responsibility</u>	<u>No of Actions</u>
Climate Change Team	29
Housing & Property	8
Environmental & Commercial Services	11
Finance	5
Education	2
HR, ICT & OD	2
Total	57

- 7.5 Since the initiation of the original draft Action Plan a number of actions have already been completed, including:
- Embed the targets, aims and aspirations of the Climate Change Strategy within Moray Council's Corporate Plan;
 - Make school meals more sustainable with a reduced carbon impact. Develop and promote more vegetarian options, e.g., 'meat free' days and vegan options;
 - Develop integrated land use spatial framework for Moray identifying opportunities for food production, renewable energy and woodland planting (currently these are done individually);
 - Include policy on coastal change in Local Development Plan;
 - Prepare additional guidance on sustainable design and construction and seek to have policy incorporated into NPF4 and Building Standards and introduce a Planning Condition for developers to report on their actions taken to reduce the carbon emissions from the build and from the completed development; and
 - Complete Switched-on Towns and Cities feasibility study for Elgin and implement outcomes.
- 7.6 Due to the impact of Covid-19, original dates for completion/initiation of some actions have been missed. Where applicable these are highlighted in red type in column headed "Completion Target".
- 7.7 Although many of the actions in the draft strategy and current action plan are identified as being delivered within current resources, nearly all of these can be considered as business as usual. They help embed climate change across policies and curriculum. Moray Council has lagged on many of these functions

relative to other authorities and departments/sections will need support to address the required changes proactively. This may lead to future requests from Services for additional resources to progress certain actions where these are shown as red or amber in the plan. Most of these changes will help to address climate change by reducing carbon emissions and provide the foundations for action but will not significantly impact the carbon associated with buildings and transport.

- 7.8 Actions associated with Council buildings and Council transport require additional and, as yet, unquantified resources and this places a significant risk on the commitment to be Carbon Neutral by 2030. To address this, funding for consultancy services would be needed for the purpose of developing a carbon reduction programme for Council buildings, developing a carbon reduction programme for Transport and for developing a hydrogen strategy for Moray. It is proposed that this funding would come from the Council's Transformation fund. It is understood that this will be considered by a separate Council meeting as one of a number of proposals for Transformation funding.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 In finalising the Climate Change Strategy and the commitment to be a "Carbon Neutral Council by 2030", it is important that the work done in the first phase, to create a platform for change, is recognised, but also that there remains a significant risk to this ambition until the programmes for Buildings and Transport are developed, approved and funding sources identified – in effect the second phase of our journey towards 2030. This second phase must effect a step change in the Council's activities, but has and will continue to require significant advance planning and external funding support.

- 8.2 The proposed phasing for the Climate Change Strategy is as follows:-

Phase 1

- March 2021
 - Final Strategy, outcomes from consultation, proposed amendments and resource requirements reported to Committee for approval and approval of resources for staff and budget.
 - The Head of Economic Growth and Development becomes responsible for the Council's Climate Change Strategy.
 - Consideration of consultancy funding for Hydrogen, Transport and Buildings from council transformation funding (timing to be confirmed).
 - Commence implementation of actions identified for 21/22 in the strategy across all Council services for which each Head of Service will be accountable.
- June 2021
 - Appointment of Climate Change Principal Officer.
- July/August 2021
 - Proposed procurement of consultancy for Hydrogen, Transport and Buildings.

- Establish operational delivery group.
- Strategy actions included in service performance reports.
- Develop communications strategy.
- Appointment of climate change project officers.
- Review of Action Plan by Climate Change Team.
- Publication of final Strategy document and easy read version.
- October 2021
 - 6-month performance update on Strategy delivery to Committee.

Phase 2

- March/April 2022
 - Annual update on Strategy delivery.
 - Incorporate strategy actions into individual service plans at next review point.
 - Recommendations on programmes for decarbonising Council Buildings and Transport.
 - Recommendations for Hydrogen development, approval of action plan for 2022/23.
 - Identify potential schemes for land use and carbon offset that may be needed to become Carbon neutral based on forecasted Buildings and Transport programmes.
- October 2022
 - Strategy progress report.
- March 2023
 - Annual update on Strategy and recommendations for Carbon offset and any additional actions to reduce carbon.

8.3 Staff Resources and Covid Impacts

Immediate response to the pandemic alongside delivery of essential services must take priority at this time and whilst sustainability including protecting our environment is a principle within the draft Recovery and Renewal Strategic Framework, staffing resources are expected to remain under significant pressure particularly during phase 1 as set out above and this may introduce a degree of delay in the anticipated timetable which services are unable to control or effectively mitigate against.

9. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Corporate Plan 2019-2024 and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)).

The draft Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030 supports the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2019-2024. The Council has declared a climate change emergency and the measures set out in the draft strategy seek to create a resilient, biodiverse, fair and more sustainable future for everyone within Moray”.

The strategy is aligned to deliver the priorities:

- Ensuring a just transition for all in the shift to a low carbon economy;

- Addressing inequalities of fuel poverty;
- Empowering individuals and communities through education and information provision to make informed choices with respect to climate change;
- Protecting and enhancing the world we live in to protect it for the future; and
- Being innovative in identifying solutions for cost reduction and income generation opportunities.

(b) Policy and Legal

Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a duty on public bodies to act in a way they consider most sustainable and in the way best calculated to deliver emission reduction targets set in the Act.

Climate change is increasingly being embedded in all government policies ranging from Infrastructure delivery, energy policies and NPF4 and these will influence the majority of council policies moving forward.

(c) Financial Implications

To achieve a position of net zero carbon emissions by 2030 will require significant capital investment. It is recognised that progression of certain actions will only be possible through the provision of external funding, initiatives led and/or supported by others (e.g., Transport Scotland) and sufficient expertise and skills being available.

If Climate Change is to be a priority it will need significant resources as highlighted in this report. Without these staffing levels and budget requirements the Council will fall short of the Commitment of being “A carbon neutral Council by 2030 with an ongoing reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the Council area as a whole (from homes and business)” by a long way.

To progress implementation and development of the Strategy as detailed within this report, the following resources are required:

- Revenue budget of £20,000 for communications, materials and project development;
- Staffing budget of £164,746 (subject to job evaluation);and
- Consultancy budget of £130,000 (to be determined separately as part of transformation funding).

Depending on council finances, Climate Change may need to be prioritised over other services in terms of any future budget savings. Transformation of the fleet, buildings and carbon offset, e.g. through tree planting, will require significant amounts of future capital funding.

(d) Risk Implications

Climate change is arguably the biggest challenge that we face in our lifetime and for future generations. It poses significant risks to our health, our

economy, our environment, and endangers the wellbeing of future generations.

With respect to Council operations, climate change could impact on supply chains, resource supplies and infrastructure, as well as more reactive challenges relating to changes in temperature, extreme weather and heavy rainfall. This will have consequences for service delivery, creating new demands on emergency response services, the maintenance of buildings and longer-term health issues.

The Scottish Government has committed to a 'green recovery' from Covid-19, one which captures the opportunities of a just transition to net zero. Without a Climate Change Strategy in place, with associated actions identified and developed, there is significant risk that external funding and investment opportunities will not be attainable.

(e) Staffing Implications

Staffing implications linked to climate change are as detailed within this report, including support within all services and in particular the creation of a Climate Change Team to lead, co-ordinate and support the Strategy

- 3 permanent staff consisting Principal Officer (Grade 11), Project Officer (Grade 9) Project Officer (Grade 8).

(f) Property

There will be property implications linked to the Climate Change Strategy. The Strategy will impact on council housing, corporate buildings and the Learning Estate. These implications will be set out in more detail as the key actions relating to Property are progressed.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

Climate Change will impact on every service area delivered by the Council. It has the potential to impact on Equalities for example in respect of support for active travel and fuel poverty and will also have a socio-economic impact.

(h) Consultations

Consultations have been undertaken with the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Deputy Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), all Heads of Service, Equalities Officer and the Chair of the Climate Change Working Group. Where comments have been received, these have been included within the report.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 **On the 27 of June 2019, the Council made a Climate Emergency Declaration which recognised that climate change is an ecological emergency and committed to developing a Climate Change Strategy with a goal of being carbon neutral by 2030 and that the Council, its**

officers and members will work with others across Moray to deliver that goal.

10.2 This strategy is the response to commitment made in the declaration, and:

- provides the strategic direction that our climate change and environmental initiatives and goals will be aligned to over the next 10 years.**
- has been developed taking in to account the important role the council plays in protecting and improving the lives and livelihoods of its residents, communities and businesses.**
- has been consulted upon with the residents and businesses of Moray, and feedback received has shaped the development of the final strategy and action plan.**
- recognises that our work and activities should be undertaken in such a way as to ensure the benefits of climate change action are shared widely, while the costs do not unfairly burden those least able to pay, or whose livelihoods are directly or indirectly at risk as the economy shifts and changes.**

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Background Papers: With Author