



REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 14 NOVEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: PUBLIC SECTOR CLIMATE CHANGE REPORTING

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the Council's Public Sector Report on Compliance with Climate Change Duties 2022/23 and updates to the reporting methodology and statutory duties.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (33) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to reviewing or preparing a Climate Change Strategy to provide framework for actions aimed at reducing carbon emissions and actions to restore biodiversity.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- i) considers and notes the Council's Public Sector Report on Compliance with Climate Change Duties 2022/23; and**
- ii) considers and notes updates made to the reporting methodology for 2022/23 and statutory duties.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 requires public sector bodies to publish annual climate change reports. This is intended to demonstrate compliance with public sector bodies' climate change duties, to engage leaders and encourage action to be taken to reduce carbon emissions.
- 3.2 The Council has a duty under Section 44 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to contribute to reducing Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions, contribute to helping Scotland adapt to a changing climate, and to act in a way it considers most sustainable.

- 3.3 The Council submitted the first mandatory report on compliance with climate change duties to the Scottish Government in November 2016, covering the period 2015/16, and has subsequently submitted its annual reports on time each November.

4. PERFORMANCE AND UPDATES

- 4.1 A copy of the Council's Public Sector Report on Compliance with Climate Change Duties as due to be submitted to the Scottish Government by 30 November 2023 has been uploaded to the Committee Management Information System (CMIS) and is available as an additional meeting document.
- 4.2 A data error discovered within a waste dataset led to the Council's carbon emissions for the previous reporting year being understated by 74.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e). The Council's carbon emissions for reporting year 2021/22 were therefore 24,565 tCO₂e. Officers will update the Scottish Government regarding this error alongside this year's statutory reporting.
- 4.3 In 2022/23, the Council's recorded carbon emissions were 25,565 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) – an increase of 1,000 tCO₂e (4.1%) compared to reporting year 2021/22. A summary of changes by emissions source, illustrating how emissions have changed between the reporting years is provided in **Appendix 1**. Many of the increases in carbon emissions during this reporting year are Scope 3 type emissions. Scope 3 emissions are indirect emissions of the Council from within its value chain. Whilst not all Scope 3 emissions are included within the Council's 2030 net zero target, it continues to have a statutory duty to monitor, record and reduce these emissions.
- 4.4 The increase in the Council's recorded carbon emissions during 2022/23 is principally the result of a significant return to 'business as usual' working practices across the organisation following the Covid-19 pandemic. This trend has surpassed forecasted expectations and next steps will be discussed as part of the update to the Council's Climate Change Plan and Routemap to Net Zero Emissions.
- 4.5 2022/23 was the first year that emissions associated with staff commuting to and from Council premises have been reported. This represented a carbon increase of 1,658 tCO₂e. This emission source is calculated based on results of the Council's annual staff travel survey, as well as an audit of vehicles within staff car parks. It is envisaged that further increases in this emission source will occur within the next reporting year as actions to maximise building occupancy progress but will represent a saving on fully office based scenarios.
- 4.6 Diesel and petrol consumption has increased, in part due to greater use of pool vehicles for business travel. A change in legislation has required the use of diesel instead of gas oil in plant and machinery which has also contributed to this increase, though this is partially offset by a decrease in gas oil emissions.

- 4.7 Increased corporate travel bookings through a return to in-person meeting arrangements has also contributed to an increase in emissions. Grey fleet mileage (personal vehicles used for business purposes), hotel stays, short-haul flights and rail journeys have led to a collective increase of 193 tCO_{2e}. This increase was to be expected as we returned to new hybrid patterns of working but with increased business activity requiring travel. The Council's Travel Plan Steering Group will discuss this issue and potential solutions on 23 November 2023.
- 4.8 The highest number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff employed during the 2022-23 financial year was 3,800, an increase of 38 FTE since the previous report. This is not considered to be a significant variance. This figure is used to calculate the carbon emissions resulting from homeworking.
- 4.9 The methodology for calculating homeworking emissions has now changed nationally, taking account of hybrid working patterns which are now more clearly defined. This source represented carbon emissions of 7.6 tCO_{2e}, calculated using the new national emissions multiplier of 0.34075 kgCO_{2e} per FTE working hour (estimated).
- 4.10 Several energy saving projects and initiatives were carried out in 2022/23:
- LED lighting replacement;
 - Water tap replacements;
 - Boiler replacements;
 - Heating controls updated.

These changes represented an estimated carbon saving of 3.4 tCO_{2e}.

- 4.11 The Council's annual procurement report highlights the number of contracts with environmental/climate change conditions attached. This included 26 contracts in the reporting year, broken down by conditions as follows:
- 7 x energy;
 - 11 x greenhouse gases;
 - 5 x waste; and
 - 3 x sustainable construction.
- 4.12 All of the data used within the submission was obtained from previous compliance reports and from sections within the Council which collect data as part of their operational functions. In some cases, data used within the submission has been the basis for papers approved by Council committees.
- 4.13 To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the reporting, it is important that the data and information used is validated. From this reporting year, officers have arranged with colleagues in Aberdeenshire Council to conduct mutual external peer-review of the reporting dependent on workload capacity in respective teams.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The data collected as part of the Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting will be used to inform updates to the Council's Climate Change Plan and Routemap to Net Zero which will be reported to a meeting of this Committee in spring 2024.
- 5.2 In the meantime, the Committee should be aware that the continuing trend of returning to a 'business as usual' working practice is a risk to the Council in terms of achieving its own and subsequent national statutory emissions targets. The Council's climate change officers have worked alongside key services to consider what measures would be most helpful and achievable to address this situation.
- 5.3 Emissions from fossil fuel based heat sources continue to represent a significant proportion of the Council's carbon emissions. Taking all steps to decarbonise building heating systems is necessary to achieving local and national net zero targets.

HEAT IN BUILDINGS

- 5.4 Under the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021, the Council now has a statutory duty to produce a building assessment report for each of its buildings to check if they are suitable to connect to a heat network. The reports will provide important data for heat network zoning by highlighting opportunities where buildings can reasonably benefit from low carbon district heating.
- 5.5 The data collected can then be used to develop heat network zones, which are areas where there is a high concentration of buildings that could be connected to a heat network. This can help to make heat networks more cost-effective and efficient, and can also encourage investment in local heat network projects.
- 5.6 The heat network reports will be produced and submitted to the Scottish Government by the Council's climate change and energy officers as soon as reasonably practicable and thereafter at intervals of five years in line with the statutory duty.

6. FUTURE REPORTING

- 6.1 The Council will continue to be required to publish annual climate change reports as per the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 and Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020. This statutory reporting will be fulfilled by the Council's climate change officers.
- 6.2 Officers working across the Council will therefore continue to have a responsibility to provide all necessary information required for submission as part of the statutory annual climate change reporting.

- 6.3 Data collected for the purposes of annual climate change reporting including areas showing increases will continue to be used to inform updates to the Council's Climate Change Action Plan and Routemap to Net Zero Carbon Emissions.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

This reporting demonstrates the Council's progress in contributing to Scotland's ambitious greenhouse gas emissions targets.

The Council's Corporate Plan 2019-2024 identifies the environment as a key principle in the delivery of the Council's priorities:

"Environment – look after the world we live in to protect it for our future"

and for Moray Council to be:

"A resource efficient, carbon neutral council that works with partners to mitigate the worst effects of Climate Change, to create a resilient, fair and more sustainable future for everyone within Moray".

(b) Policy and Legal

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a duty on public bodies to act in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of Scotland's climate change targets; in the way best calculated to help deliver any programme for climate change adaptation laid before the Scottish Parliament; in a way it considers most sustainable.

The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 requires that public bodies prepare a report on compliance with climate change duties as set out by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 requires that the body to provide further details within its mandatory reporting on climate change duties.

(c) Financial implications

There is potential for significant financial cost to the Council to offset carbon emissions in the future which is being considered as part of the Climate Change Routemap progress reporting.

(d) Risk Implications

There is a risk that avoidable financial costs could be incurred by the Council in the future if actions are not taken to reduce carbon emissions. The approach to this is being monitored through Climate Change Routemap Updates.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications.

(f) Property

There are no property implications.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities/socio economic impact implications.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

The recommendations within this report are intended to reduce the Council's carbon emissions. The upcoming revision to the Council's Climate Change Action Plan & Routemap to Net Zero document will include updated emissions forecasting and actions, taking account of the data and recommendations arising from this report.

(i) Consultations

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Corporate Management Team, the Legal Services Manager, the Energy Officer, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Senior Organisational Development Adviser, the Sustainable Travel Officer, the Senior Project Officer Active Travel Strategy and the Democratic Services Manager.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The submission of the Public Sector Report on Compliance with Climate Change Duties 2022/23 to the Scottish Government in November 2023 will fulfil the Council's statutory climate change reporting obligation.

8.2 The Council will continue to be required to submit annual Public Sector Reports on Compliance with Climate Change Duties.

8.3 Data collected for the 2022/23 submission reveals that a return to 'business as usual' has led to an increase in the Council's carbon emissions, and next steps are suggested to address this.

Author of Report: George Gunn, Climate Change Officer
Background Papers: As referred to within this report.
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