



**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 19 OCTOBER 2021**

SUBJECT: CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY UPDATE

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Committee on actions approved within the Climate Change Strategy (CCS) for 2020-2030, consultancy studies, staffing, and next steps in order to set out a route map to achieve the Council's declaration of being net zero by 2030.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (F) (33) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to providing, developing and monitoring the Council's Economic Development and Infrastructure Services.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) notes the updates on the actions set out in the CCS as set out in Appendix 1;
- (ii) notes the progress and timescales for the consultancy work commissioned on hydrogen, buildings and transport;
- (iii) agrees that a route map to becoming net zero by 2030 including short, medium and long term actions be reported back to Committee in April 2022;
- (iv) agrees that the CCS Officer/ Member working group is replaced by a CCS Programme board to monitor and review strategic progress in delivering the action plan; and that this group is supported by a CCS operational officer group (or sub groups) which meets monthly.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Climate change is arguably the biggest challenge that we face in our lifetime and for future generations. On the 27 June 2019 the Council made a Declaration which recognised that climate change is an ecological emergency, and the Council needs to take necessary actions to protect our area, country and planet (para 6 of the Minute refers).
- 3.2 In response to the commitments made in the declaration, on the 10 March 2021 (para 13 of minute refers) the Council adopted a Climate Change Strategy for 2020-2030. The strategy set a goal of the Council being carbon neutral by 2030 and that the Council, its officers and members will work with others across Moray to deliver that goal. The strategy also set out a 57 point Action Plan to assist in the progress to net zero.
- 3.3 When the CCS was approved it was agreed that there was a need to commission further consultancy reports for key actions relating to hydrogen, buildings and transport. This is required to allow the CCS to be developed to include detailed targets, costings, milestones and KPIs in order that the strategy can include a detailed route map for the Council to reach net zero emissions by 2030.
- 3.4 When the CCS was approved it was also agreed that a Climate Change Team would be created to lead, co-ordinate and support the Strategy.

4. **PROGRESS UPDATE**

- 4.1 To progress the CCS, the actions up to October 2021 were designated as Phase 1 and designed to create a platform for change. These include 57 actions in the action plan, consultations, governance and staffing issues.

Action Plan Progress

- 4.2 An update of the Action Plan is included in **Appendix 1**. The progress of these actions has been categorised as follows:

Completed	11
Progress ongoing	33
No progress or facing problems in delivery	8
Progress stalled, on hold, or dependent on external factors	5
	57

- 4.3 The impact of Covid has meant there have been delays, however some key actions completed or progressed include:
- Procurement - non-cash benefits categorisation has been included in the tendering process with a 5% weighting.
 - Sustainability and Community Benefits are covered in Procurement Training modules.
 - CPD training sessions for Learning for Sustainability delivered for 40 members of staff.
 - Schools delivering COP26 projects for pupils.

- School catering have swapped all plastic disposable cutlery for compostable alternatives
- Full vegetarian menu and one meat free day a week offered in all school settings with local suppliers used for meat, veg and dairy.
- Guidance and policies on aspects such as biodiversity, natural flood management and woodland cover delivered. Monitoring and additional opportunities to be identified.
- Moray Council Travel Plan completed including staff survey comparing before and after COVID.
- Moray Council now operates 28 electric vehicles (up from 11 in 2019).

4.4 However there are a number of outstanding items from Phase 1. These are mainly due to the time taken to recruit the CCS team and include:

- Creating a network of staff climate change champions will be a priority for new climate change team.
- Climate change and biodiversity assessments as part of all committee papers are being drawn up and will be implemented by December 2021.
- Communication strategy delayed until climate change team put in place.
- Strategy actions to be included in service performance reports.

Consultancy studies

4.5 The commission of consultation studies for key actions required to allow the creation of a detailed route map for the Council to reach net zero emissions.

- Hydrogen Strategy: to consider opportunities for the transition of Council owned buildings and transport fleet, associated infrastructure and opportunities for business and industry
- Transport Strategy: to develop a strategy for on and off street public charging infrastructure for electric vehicles and to identify a rolling procurement programme for converting the Councils transport fleet to low emission vehicles.
- Buildings Strategy: to calculate current emissions of the Council property assets and review the planned projects through the Property Asset Management Plan and the 10 year Capital Plan to create an outline plan and recommendations.

4.6 All three strategies to be commissioned September 2021 with delivery of relevant information by February 2022.

Staffing

4.7 The creation of the Climate Change Team to lead, co-ordinate and support the Strategy was agreed on 10 March 2021. This team is now in place and is made up of 3 permanent staff consisting of Principal Officer (started 26 July 2021), Project Officer (started 27 September 2021) Project Officer – communications (started 4 October 2021).

Governance

4.8 When the CCS was approved it was agreed that an operational group be established to oversee the transition to net zero. It was noted that due to the wide scope of climate change and climate change related activities, Heads of Service will have responsibility and accountability for climate change actions and targets within their service area. However, they may delegate their responsibility to third tier managers to ensure that day to day management

responsibilities are clear and that delegated decision making is undertaken at the appropriate level.

- 4.9 For governance of the CCS it is proposed that a CCS Programme board is established to monitor and review strategic progress in delivering the action plan. This work will then be reported into the Transforming the Economy Board for consideration by members. Additionally, a CCS operational officer group will be established which will meet monthly. This will be made up of officers tasked with delivering actions in the Action Plan and this group can set up thematic sub groups to co-ordinate specific activities if necessary.

Wider Community

- 4.10 Connections between the Climate Change Team and the Moray Climate Assembly, and the Environmental Social Enterprise Network have been established and are continuing.

Next Steps

- 4.11 The above actions were included in the CCS Phase 1 to create a platform for change to enable the transition to net zero.
- 4.12 The next steps will involve completing the following actions by April 2022:
- Annual update on Strategy delivery. This will include a route map with short, medium and long term actions and interim targets to achieve the 2030 aspiration
 - Incorporate strategy actions into individual service plans at next review point.
 - Recommendations on programmes for decarbonising Council Buildings, decarbonising fleet transport, and for hydrogen development.
 - Identify potential schemes for land use and carbon offset that may be needed to become Carbon neutral based on forecasted Buildings and Transport programmes.
 - Develop carbon accounting process for Moray Growth Deal and Levelling Up Fund bid. Process to be suitable for other outline business case and decision making.
 - Develop a climate change communications strategy, with an internal network of climate change champions to promote behavioural change and create networking opportunities.
 - Input into draft National Planning Framework 4 expected to be published soon.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The CCS supports the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan. The Council has declared a climate change emergency and the measures set out in the CCS 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

Funding is already agreed by council for the consultancy studies referenced in para 4.3. The route map to be reported in April 2022 will set out the financial implications for the Council to meet its 2030 aspiration although this will be after the budget setting for 2022/23 and there may need to be some consideration to develop a budget for that year through the process.

(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. There is a risk that the Council's aim of being net zero by 2030 will not be realised if the actions within the CCS are not progressed as a priority.

(e) Staffing Implications

The Climate Change Team of 3 permanent staff will be in place during the first week of October 2021.

Additional staffing implications including support within all services across the Council to achieve the route map will be reported in April 2022.

(f) Property

Consultancy studies outlined in para 4.3 which form part of the CCS 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. Individual elements of the strategy will be screened and, where appropriate, assessed on their implications for equality and human rights.

(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, Councillor Nicol as the Council's Climate Change champion and Lindsey Robinson Committee Services Officer. Where comments have been received, these have been included within the report.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report provides an update on progress on the 57 actions identified within the CCS approved by Council on 10 March 2021. A number of actions have been completed and are being actioned. The recruitment of the new Climate Change team will help services to move forward with delivery of the CCS including the commissioning of three key consultancy studies on hydrogen, buildings and fleet.**
- 6.2 These studies will help inform a costed route map to net zero which will be reported to Committee in April 2022.**

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Background Papers:
Ref: