

**The Highland Council**  
**Skye, Ross & Cromarty Area Committee**

**30 April 2014**

Agenda Item	<b>8(a)</b>
Report No	<b>SRC 15/14</b>

**Carbon CLEVER**

**Report by Head of Policy and Reform**

**Summary**

This paper provides Members with an update on the Carbon CLEVER initiative and asks Members to consider how the initiative can be further developed in Skye, Ross & Cromarty.

**1. Background – Carbon CLEVER**

- 1.1 At a meeting of the Highland Council in June 2013, Members agreed to an initiative to achieve a carbon neutral Inverness in a low carbon Highlands by 2025, Carbon CLEVER. This initiative was launched at a conference held at the Council headquarters, Inverness on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Achieving such an ambitious target will require strong engagement from a wide range of stakeholders across the private, public and third sectors, and the residents and communities of Highland.
- 1.2 Carbon CLEVER has the aim to capture, co-ordinate and promote the good work that is being conducted across the Highland region to reduce carbon emissions and to identify a programme of work to meet the ambitions of the initiative. By doing this it will attract investment to the region, accelerating the transition to a low carbon economy.
- 1.3 The Council has a commitment in its Programme that it will maintain its commitment to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration and work with everyone to achieve a Carbon CLEVER Highlands by 2025.

**2. Engagement**

- 2.1 For the Carbon CLEVER initiative to be successful and achieve its aims, it will be necessary to engage with, and work in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders across the public, private and third sector, as well as communities and the residents of Highland.
- 2.2 Actively engaging with communities and stakeholders will facilitate the exchange of ideas and good practice, and will allow learning outcomes from other areas to be shared effectively. It will also help in the identification of local opportunities and challenges and enable effective project development, training etc.
- 2.3 Given the geography of the Highlands, and in particular Skye, Ross & Cromarty, it will be necessary to discuss and develop a plan to ensure that engagement occurs regularly with those best placed to help ensure the aims and targets of Carbon CLEVER are achieved. This could potentially be conducted through liaison with Community Councils, Carbon CLEVER workshops, working with community groups etc.

2.4 An Engagement Strategy for Carbon CLEVER will be presented at a meeting of the Highland Council on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

### **3. Projects**

#### **3.1 Carbon CLEVER Declaration**

In June 2010, the Highland Climate Change Declaration (HCCD) was launched. This initiative was developed by the Highland Environment Forum and 21 Highland organisations had signed the Declaration by March 2012. Signatories committed to measure their carbon footprint, reduce it by 3% each year, provide an annual update of progress, share information and work with partners in Highland to promote good practice, and encourage businesses and communities to take action.

3.2 The Highland Climate Change Declaration has been rebranded as the Carbon CLEVER Declaration in line with the Carbon CLEVER initiative and will officially be launched on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at the Craigmonie Hotel, Inverness. The Carbon CLEVER Declaration is aimed at businesses, community groups and public sector organisations interested in making financial and resource savings by becoming more efficient and reducing their carbon emissions.

3.3 The Declaration will be an effective tool for empowering organisations and for capturing and publicising progress. This collaborative transition towards a low carbon economy will encourage and inspire others, ensuring that Highland takes a leading role in mitigating against climate change.

3.4 The objectives of the Carbon CLEVER Declaration have been revised in order to align them with Carbon CLEVER initiative; to encourage and enable signatories to make progress and to make reporting less onerous. Signatories to the Carbon CLEVER Declaration will benefit from:

- Gaining public recognition and free promotion in print, social media and at events;
- Saving money and reducing carbon emissions by becoming more efficient;
- Access to free support and tools including funding maps, case studies and business cases to help implement real savings; and
- Being part of a Highland peer support network and having access to Carbon CLEVER branding.

#### **3.5 Carbon CLEVER Commuting**

Carbon CLEVER Commuting is a new initiative to promote sustainable travel throughout the Highlands, as part of Transport Scotland's Smarter Choices, Smarter Places programme. A key aspect of this project will be the creation of a commuting microsite and web portal, providing information and case studies to help support and encourage Highland residents to make more sustainable travel choices. A range of marketing materials will be available via the portal to partner businesses and signatories to the Carbon CLEVER Declaration, which will help them to promote sustainable commuting to their staff and customers. Carbon CLEVER Commuting will be launched in May 2014.

#### **3.6 SMILEGOV**

SMILEGOV is a European project, and was developed around the idea that cooperation between different levels of island governance (i.e. national, regional and local) can have a key role in reaching the 20-20-20 EU climate change

targets. The project has the potential to be rolled out on the Isle of Skye, and would help us to work with the local community to produce an Island Sustainable Energy Action Plan (ISEAP). Other island groups involved in the project are the Canary Islands and the Greek Islands.

- 3.7 The aim of the project would be to empower Skye to effectively manage its carbon footprint and make decisions in order to reduce this. This would be achieved by working with key stakeholders, community groups, and individuals on the island. The ISEAP could then be used as a mechanism to design and implement projects on the island to reduce carbon emissions.
- 3.8 The project would be managed by the Scottish Islands Federation (SIF), with guidance and input from the Council's Climate Change team. The development of an ISEAP for Skye would require close collaboration with SIF, Community Energy Scotland, energy and planning officers as well as other islands such as Bute and Arran.

#### 4. **Implications**

Resource Implications: There are no direct resource implications associated with this report at this time.

Legal Implications: The Highland Council has an obligation to support the national effort to reduce carbon emissions to meet the targets set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

Equalities Implications: There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Climate Change/Carbon CLEVER Implications: The Council has commitments to mitigate against climate change by working to reduce carbon emissions from its own operations and for the region as a whole. The projects presented in the paper will help facilitate a coordinated approach to mitigate against climate change.

Risk Implications: There are no risks identified at this stage.

Gaelic Implications: There are no implications identified at this stage.

#### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to:

(i) Agree that the Climate Change Team work with local organisations, stakeholders and community groups to gain an insight into local opportunities and priorities to inform the Carbon CLEVER Action Plan, and to discuss how this could best be achieved;

(ii) Discuss how to effectively promote the Carbon CLEVER Declaration to businesses and organisations in the region; and

(iii) Discuss the potential of the SMILEGOV project for Skye.

Designation: Head of Policy and Reform

Date: 09/04/14

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