

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Climate Change Panel** held in Leader's Meeting Room, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Tuesday, 26 November 2019 at 3:00pm.

Present:

Mr B Boyd
Mr J Bruce
Mrs I Campbell
Mrs M Davidson
Mr C Fraser

Mr J Gray
Mrs A MacLean
Mr D Macpherson
Mr R MacWilliam
Mrs T Robertson

Non-Member also present:

Mr J Gordon

Officials in Attendance:

Mr S Black, Executive Chief Officer Transformation and Economy
Ms N Wallace, Environment Manager
Mr K Masson, Climate Change Officer
Ms F Daschofsky, Climate Change Coordinator
Mrs O Bayon, Administrative Assistant

Mrs T Robertson in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr M Finlayson, Mr T Heggie, Mr D Louden, Mr S Mackie, Mr A MacInnes, Mr D MacLeod, Mr D Rixson and Mr B Thompson.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

There had been circulated Minutes of the Climate Change Panel held on 17 October 2019 which were **NOTED**.

4. Request for Climate Change Resources

There was circulated Joint Report No. CCP/6/19 by the Executive Chief Officer - Infrastructure and Environment and the Environment Manager.

Following a summary of the report, the following points were made: -

- it was confirmed that the potential of a levy on cruise ship passengers had been raised with the Scottish Government;
- in response to a query, it was confirmed that the Highlands Adapts Initiative had arisen through collaboration between the Highland Council (HC) and Adaptation Scotland focusing on how the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) could work collaboratively to approach and address shared climate-based risks; this was especially important as some sparse rural communities were likely to be at serious climate risk. A partnership approach was seen to be the most appropriate way to address the key cross cutting risks and identify where they were likely to arise;
- planning was taking place to co-fund a post with CPP to co-ordinate and pull together a risk assessment and workplan for Highland Adapts over a 2 to 3-year period. So far, there was an agreement with 5 CPP's and an offer in principle from the Scottish Government;
- further clarification on the posts detailed within the paper was provided and it was confirmed that the Climate Change Team required dedicated staff to undertake this large-scale project to align Highland Council (HC) with the Scottish Government. The staffing proposal would be an additional 1 Full time equivalent (FTE) plus an upgrade from an existing Officer post to Manager;
- it was emphasised that existing Council reports i.e. Flood Risk Assessments would be utilised as part of the climate change adaptation data analysis;
- concern was raised that the proposed costings of £140k would be inadequate to deliver the full scope of the Climate Change project, including any contingencies. However, it was confirmed that £140k was just an indicative value at this point and the team didn't want to overinflate this but actual costs would be calculated for full Council in December in the usual format;
- Adaptation Scotland were keen to establish a partnership with HC to potentially use as a model at the 26th session of Conferences of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow next year, to demonstrate the innovative and sensible approach in managing climate risk, especially given the size & scale of the region; and
- it was proposed that the Climate Change Team meet Members for a workshop in January 2020 to capture Members' ideas for consideration.

Thereafter, the Panel **AGREED**: -

- i. to bring a report to the December Council, setting out the resource requirements which could be funded from the Council's Change Programme as outlined in the discussion paper;
- ii. to position the Council's climate change work programme as closely as feasible with the Scottish Government Programme;
- iii. to seek external assistance in pulling together the various strands of work underway and matching those against the SG Programme. This short piece of work was estimated to cost a maximum of £25k;
- iv. the resource requirements as outlined in the discussion paper;

and **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Council that: -

- v. a Climate Change Manager be appointed to lead the work, supported by a minimum of 2 Officers, the estimated cost of which would be £71-77k;
- vi. to seek £20k to complete carbon baseline work for the region;
- vii. to seek a contribution of £15k for each of the next 3 years to support the employment of a Project Manager to oversee the Highland Adapts initiative;
- viii. to host a Climate change Seminar in Spring 2020; and
- ix. to seek a £10k fund to organise and facilitate this work.

The meeting ended at 3:35 pm.