

Agenda Item	7
Report No	CCWG/14/20

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Climate Change Working Group

Date: 17th September 2020

Report Title: Climate Change Workstreams Update

Report By: Climate Change Officer

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of a number of workstreams and projects which are underway across the Council, and where appropriate, with partners, to address the climate and ecological emergency.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – there are no resource implications arising from this report. However, Members will note that the scale and range of work currently underway in respect of addressing the climate and ecological emergency is extensive. It is hoped that, as a reoccurring item on the agenda of the Climate Change Working Group, this report will provide confidence to both Members and the public in respect of the significant action being undertaken to tackle the climate and ecological emergency by the Highland Council. However, it is also recognised that the Climate Change Team is currently under-resourced given the scale of the commitment to achieve a carbon neutral Highland by 2025, particularly in respect of developing robust communications with both the press and Highland communities.
- 3.2 Legal – there are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – there are no community implications arising from this report.
- 3.4 Climate Change/Carbon CLEVER – there are no direct climate change implications arising from this report.
- 3.5 Risk – there are no risk implications arising from this report.

3.6 Gaelic – There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4. Background

- 4.1 Members agreed at the previous meeting of the Climate Change Working Group that an update on current workstreams should be provided as a standing item at all future meetings.
- 4.2 This paper provides a short overview of the most pertinent current workstreams, taking into consideration Members' comments at the meeting of the Climate Change Working Group on 11th August 2020. A full list of current work priorities is set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

5. New & Existing Workstreams – Key Areas of Focus

- 5.1 A significant body of work has been undertaken since the last meeting of the Climate Change Working Group on 11th August, and this can be summarised as follows:
- **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategic Control Plan** – workshops have been held with both officers and Members to identify the vision, values and focus areas for the EV infrastructure strategic control plan. Further information is provided in the paper under Agenda item 6.
 - **Highland Adapts** – continued efforts to attract additional partners to the initiative, and to refine the outline business case to reflect the increasing need for robust adaptation action in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding has now been formally committed by three partners (The Highland Council, NatureScot (SNH), and NHS Highland), totalling £45k per year for at least 2 years. A meeting will be held with committed partners in late September to discuss recruitment of Project Manager to lead on the further development of this initiative and establishment of a formal partnership board.
 - **Programme Alignment** – ongoing liaison with contractor and workshops with staff to identify critical opportunities and gaps which need to be addressed, to ensure Council is better positioned to secure low carbon funding identified in the Programme for Government announcement on 1st September. It is expected that the draft report will be presented to the next meeting of the Climate Change Working Group.
 - **Green Impact** – significant work has been undertaken in collaboration with HIE, UHI and the Council's Eco Officer network to develop plans for roll-out of NUS's Green Impact behaviour change tool later in 2020. Further information is provided in the paper under Agenda item 3.
 - **Highland Environment Forum** – the Climate Change Officer chaired and presented at the first online meeting of the Highland Environment Forum on 10th September, with the theme for the session being Climate Change in the Highlands: Opportunities for Large Scale Change. Another session, focussed on how nature can help reduce climate impacts, will be held on 24th September.
 - **Climate Change Conference** – work is well underway for a virtual Highland Climate Change Conference which will be held via Microsoft Teams on Friday 30th October 2020. A range of speakers have been approached to present to the conference, and a suite of workshops will also be held with a view to shaping aspects of the Council's net zero plan. The conference will focus on 4 key themes, namely:
 - Biodiversity, Habitat Restoration & the Climate Emergency
 - Our Local, National & International Role

- What Can Individuals Do, and What Support is Available?
- The Green Recovery

- **Public Bodies Climate Change Duties** – work continues to gather data in respect of our statutorily-required climate change return for 2019/20. It is anticipated that a draft of this report will be presented to Members of the Climate Change Working Group at its next meeting on 6th November 2020, prior to submission to the Scottish Government on 30th November 2020.

- **Landscapes as Carbon Sinks** – the Climate Change Team has been liaising with the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation (ECCI) and the University of Edinburgh (UoE) for some time in respect of their [Landscapes as Carbon Sinks](#) project, which aims to design a systemic transformation of the land use sector to help Scotland achieve its 2045 net zero ambition. A partnership has now been facilitated between ECCI, UoE, NatureScot (SNH) and the Peatlands Partnership to ensure that a significant focus of the work undertaken throughout this project will be within The Flow Country.

- **Climate Week 2020** – a range of online events have been organised to mark Climate Week 2020, which runs from 14th to 20th September 2020. These include 5 separate community sessions on the future of low carbon transport in Highland, a session focussing on the importance of “growing your own” to help tackle the climate and ecological emergency, and a presentation on the work The Highland Council has undertaken to date around the climate change agenda to mark the launch of the Sustainable Scotland Network’s new strategy.

- **The Flow Country World Heritage Site Project** – The Flow Country successfully passed the first stage of the World Heritage Site process earlier in the year and the Council continues to work closely with other members of the Peatlands Partnership to prepare for the second stage. In the coming months a Project Coordinator will be employed, with the two aims of carrying out a community consultation and submitting a nomination document to UNESCO. The Highland Council is one of several partners funding this project.

5.2 The above provides a very general overview of the work undertaken for each of the respective workstreams, and a further verbal update can be provided to Members if additional information would be helpful.

Designation: Climate Change Officer

Date: 8th September 2020

Author: Keith Masson

APPENDIX 1

Action Plan & Priorities 2020 – Climate Change Team

Activity / Project	Area(s) of Focus	Timescale / Dates	Priority Level
Development of Net Zero Strategy & Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy • Transport • Waste • Procurement • Land Use 	31/12/20	High
Establish <i>Highland Adapts</i> Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change adaptation 	31/12/2023	High
Carbon Baseline Report for Highland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of baseline emissions inventory for region 	30/09/2020	High
Programme Alignment - Council programme & Scottish Government programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of policy gaps • Identification of “shovel ready projects” • Support for “green economic recovery” 	30/09/2020	High
COVID-19 – Green Economic Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy • Transport • Circular Economy 	31/12/2020	High
EV Infrastructure Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport 	Ongoing	High
Green Impact Pilot - Research, Develop & Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy • Transport • Waste • Behaviour Change 	30/10/2020, then ongoing	High
Climate Change Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy 	On-going	High

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Waste • Land Use • Food Growing 		
Highland Climate Change Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity • Land use • Citizen engagement 	30/10/2020	Med
Annual Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting on all Council emissions 	30/11/2020	Med
Cromarty Firth Freeport Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy • Transport • Waste • Economic recovery 	31/12/2020	Med
Climate Change Workshops for Members, Executive Chief Officers & Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon literacy 	31/12/2020	Med
Committee Papers / Business Cases – Low Carbon Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon literacy 	31/10/2020	High
Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – Allotments & Food Growing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments & food growing 	31/10/2020	Med
Climate Week 2020 – 14 th –20 th Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen engagement 	20/09/2020	Med
Eco Officer Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff engagement • Carbon literacy • Behaviour change 	On-going	Med
Carbon CLEVER Declaration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green recovery 	31/03/2021	Med
Staff engagement re TRIADS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy 	29/02/2021	Low

Associated Workstreams (not managed by Climate Change team – list not exhaustive)

Activity / Project & Key Tasks	Areas of Focus	Timescale / Dates	Priority Level
SALIX Recycling Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy 	On-going	High
Grey & White Fleet Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport 	31/12/2020	Med
Solar PV Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy 	On-going	High
SMART Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy 	On-going	High
Energy Efficient Scotland Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy • Community engagement 	On-going	Med
NPF4, IMFLDP & iRSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Development 	Various	High
Spaces for People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active travel 	On-going	High