

Agenda Item	7
Report No	CCWG/18/20

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Climate Change Working Group

Date: 6th November 2020

Report Title: Climate Change Workstreams Update

Report By: Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure & Environment

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.
- 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 a 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. A full list of current work priorities is set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

5. 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 17th September, and this can be summarised as follows:
 - **Highland Climate Change Conference** – the first virtual Highland Climate Change Conference will take place on 2nd November 2020. The conference work will be held via Microsoft Teams on and will feature a range of speakers including Roseanna Cunningham MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform), Dr Roxane Andersen (Senior Research Fellow at the Environmental Research Institute of UHI), David Whiteford (Chairman of North Highland Initiative), Lord Thurso (Chairman of Visit Scotland), Graham Neville (Area Manager, Northern Isles and North Highland of NatureScot) and Dr Marco Springmann (Senior Researcher, Oxford University). A suite of workshops will also be held with a view to capturing delegate's views and shaping aspects of the Council's net zero plan. The conference will focus on 4 key themes, namely:
 - Biodiversity & Habitat - this section will take a closer look at the impact that climate change and human activity has had on biodiversity and habitats in Highland. Attendees will hear from peatland, agriculture, food systems, biodiversity and wildlife experts.
 - The Bigger Picture - this section will put our actions in Highland within a broader context of national and international targets and policy. Attendees will hear about The Highland Council's work, Bristol City's 'One City Ecological Emergency Strategy', climate adaptation, the UN sustainable development goals and how behavioural change can fight climate change.
 - Personal Responsibility - This section will examine what we as individuals can do to reduce our impact on the environment. Attendees will hear from Friends of the Earth, Keep Scotland Beautiful, Zero Waste Scotland, Creative Carbon and record-breaking ultra-marathon runner Donnie Campbell.
 - The Green Recovery - the economic turmoil brought by COVID-19 offers an opportunity of a green recovery to a more sustainable way of living and working. Attendees will hear about sustainable transport, renewable energy, green tourism, forestry and the role of small businesses.
 - **Public Bodies Climate Change Duties** – work to gather and scrutinise data, and prepare our annual return under the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties, has now been complete, and the finalised report will be presented to Members of the Economy & Infrastructure Committee on 4th November 2020. Over the course of 2019/20, the Council's total carbon footprint fell by 4,453 tonnes CO₂e compared to 2018/19, a year-on-year reduction of 10%. This fall can be attributed to a variety of different projects, as well as a reduction in the emissions associated with consumption of electricity.

- **Greenhouse Gas Baseline Inventory Report for Highland** – work to finalise the greenhouse gas inventory report for Highland has now been completed, and will be presented as a separate item at this meeting of the Climate Change Working Group on 6th November 2020.
- **Programme Alignment** – officers are now in the process of reviewing the draft programme alignment report which has been prepared by Practically Green. The draft report provides a comprehensive review of the opportunities and challenges which must be faced by the Council to meaningfully address the climate and ecological emergency, whilst providing some robust advice which, if taken, will put the Council in a much stronger position to secure external funding for climate change and ecological initiatives and also to better support the required economic recovery from COVID-19. It is proposed that a workshop is held with Members in late November / early December to review the key recommendations from this report, as well as next steps, with a view to officers then taking a formal paper to full Council seek approval for taking forward the required interventions.
- **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, and this section of the work has now been complete. Stage 2 of the SCP development will now commence, and will be primarily driven through engagement with individual teams and officers, as it now requires to be informed and influenced at an operational level. This stage will include:
 - Identifying objectives by which to steer project development;
 - Translating the vision into deliverable packages of work so that it can be easily understood at officer level how projects and initiatives will be shaped;
 - Assessing existing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), then analysing and agreeing the relevance and validity of such to enable the SCP to be measured effectively as part of future reporting cycles.
- **Growing Our Future – A Draft Food Growing Strategy for Highland** – the Council's draft food growing strategy, which is a requirement under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, has now been opened for public consultation and can be accessed [here](#). The consultation will remain open until 23rd November 2020, and it is expected that a final version of the strategy will be presented to Members of the Climate Change Working Group early in 2021.
- **Highland Adapts** – continued efforts to attract additional partners to the initiative, to refine the outline business case to reflect the increasing need for robust adaptation action in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to scope out the most feasible opportunities for community involvement, have been undertaken. Two new potential partners have been identified, and discussions continue regarding funding commitments from both. 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. Once final funding commitments have been secured, a meeting will be held with committed partners to discuss recruitment of Project Manager to lead on the further development of this initiative and establishment of a formal partnership board.
- **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. Funding for this project has now been secured through Salix, and two separate packages will be delivered; one focussing on behaviours across the school estate, and another for non-school staff.

- **Recovery Board** – an update on climate change work, both to address and mitigate climate risks but also to better understand the likely impacts of the changing climate in Highland from environmental as well as service delivery and economic perspectives, was presented to the Recovery Board on 7th October. At that meeting, Members agreed that the work highlighted at [paragraphs 6.6.1 – 6.6.4](#) of the report should be taken forward by the Climate Change Working Group, Economy & Infrastructure Committee and Corporate Resources Committee with a view to making recommendations to The Highland Council. To that end, workshops will be held with Members to identify and agree priorities for action, and a formal paper will then be prepared for a later meeting of the Economy & Infrastructure Committee.

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: Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure & Environment

Date: 21st October 2020

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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 	31/10/2020	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” 	31/10/2020	High
COVID-19 – Green Economic Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy • Transport • Circular Economy 	Ongoing	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 	02/11/2020	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 	30/04/2021	High
Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – Allotments & Food Growing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments & food growing 	28/02/2021	Med
Climate Week 2021 – TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen engagement 	30/09/2021	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