Agenda Item	11
Report No	ECI/46/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee:	**Infrastructure & Economy**
Date:	**2 December 2021**
Report Title:	**Annual Report under Public Bodies Climate Change Duties, 2020/21**
Report By:	**Executive Chief Officer Performance & Governance**

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report presents The Highland Council's mandatory report under the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties, as required under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are invited to homologate the return submitted for reporting year 2020/21 under the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties.

3. Implications

3.1 **Resource** - There are resource implications with regards to staff time to put in place the reporting systems necessary for the required reporting processes that will need input from teams across the Council (namely Climate Change & Energy Team, Waste, Street Lighting, Fleet, Finance and the Eco Officers Network). This will be managed within the resource available for next year.

3.2 **Legal** - The Council has a legal requirement to report on its carbon emissions in accordance with the information requested by the Scottish Government. This includes complying with any deadlines or monitoring and verification standards that are imposed. In addition, the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 places a legal duty on the Council to contribute to the delivery of national emissions reduction targets of 75% by 2030 and to end Scotland's contribution to climate change by 2045, whilst acting in the way best calculated to help deliver any statutory climate change adaptation programme.

3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** – There are no community implications arising from this report.

3.4 **Climate Change/Carbon CLEVER** - Accurately monitoring and reporting on carbon emissions and climate change will help to focus attention on action to reduce carbon emissions across the Council and the wider Highland region and becomes increasingly important following on from the Council's declaration of a climate and ecological emergency in 2019.

3.5 **Risk** – There is a significant reputational risk to the Council of not being seen to deliver on its commitment to achieving a carbon neutral Highlands by 2025. Climate change is now recognised as a Corporate Risk, and it is therefore important that its impacts are properly assessed. The Council should plan to mitigate against and adapt to the effects of climate change across all service functions.

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

4 Background

4.1 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and the subsequent Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 ("the Act') introduced binding targets and legislation to reduce Scotland's emissions by 75% by 2030 against a 1990 baseline, and to end Scotland's contribution to climate change no later than 2045. In addition, the Act places specific duties on public bodies relating to climate change.

4.2 The Act requires that a public body must, in exercising its functions, act:-

- In the way best calculated to contribute to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets;
- In the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programme; and
- In a way that it considers most sustainable.

4.3 In 2015, the Scottish Government introduced an Order under the Act requiring all public bodies to submit an annual report detailing their compliance with the climate change duties detailed above.

4.4 This report provides an update to the Scottish Government on how The Highland Council is performing in respect of its duties and was submitted ahead of the report deadline of 30 November 2021. The Council's climate change duties report for 2020/21 is attached at **Appendix 1**. The 2020/21 report overall uses the same template used in previous reporting years.

4.5 The Highland Council declared a climate and ecological emergency on 9 May 2019 in recognition of the serious and accelerating changes to the world caused by climate change. Many of the actions which have flowed from this declaration are highlighted within the appended report.

4.6   The report is divided into five required sections:-

1.   Organisational profile, detailing key statistics about the organisation (e.g., size of the estate and number of employees);
2.   Governance, Management and Strategy relating to climate change;
3.   Details of the Council's own 'corporate' emissions from its estate, services and functions, including details of the top 10 carbon reduction projects as well as targets for reducing carbon emissions;
4.   Details on steps taken to adapt to the risks and impacts of climate change including priority action areas for the year ahead; and
5.   Information on how sustainable procurement practices are contributing to climate change goals and targets.

5.   Report Highlights

5.1   Over the course of 2020/21, the Council's total carbon footprint fell by **8,218 tonnes CO_2e** compared to 2019/20, a year-on-year reduction of 20.2**%**. This fall can, to a significant extent, be attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated reduction in emissions arising from use of Council offices and schools as well as business travel. However, it is important to note that for the purposes of this year's report, an emissions figure has been included to take account of additional emissions arising because of energy used by staff when working from home (see section 3b in **Appendix 1**[1]). Various projects, as well as a reduction in the emissions associated with consumption of electricity, also played a key role in the overall reduction, and these are detailed throughout the report.

5.2   To calculate the Council's total carbon footprint each year, units such as miles, kWh, tonnes of waste or litres of fuel are converted into CO_2 equivalents (CO_2e) by using specific conversion factors taken from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy's official greenhouse gas company database. These conversion factors are updated annually and consider changes to behaviours and technologies relating to renewables, energy efficiency, vehicle types and fuel economy. For example, the emissions conversion factor for electricity fell from **$0.277kgCO_2e/kWh$** in 2019/20 to **$0.253kgCO_2e/kWh$** in 2020/21 – a drop of 8.7%. This means that the same level of electricity consumption in 2020/21 would emit 8.7% less CO_2e than in 2019/20.

5.3   This reduction in the carbon footprint of electricity has been achieved through the shift nationally towards cleaner electricity, via the wide-scale installation of renewables such as wind and solar, and the removal of some fossil fuel generation from the overall energy mix. Electricity consumption (including street lighting) accounts for around **42%** of the Council's total carbon footprint; therefore, the Council's overall emissions have been significantly reduced thanks to the decarbonisation of the electricity sector, as well as through an overall reduction in consumption across the organisation (see figs 2 and 3 below).

---

[1] In 2020 the New Ways of Working project team completed a data gathering exercise which confirmed that the Highland Council had 2,600 homeworking employees as a result of the pandemic.

5.4 The graph below provides an illustration of the Council's performance in respect of carbon emissions reduction over the past 10 years:-

<u>Fig. 1 – The Highland Council's Corporate Carbon Emissions – 2011 – 2021</u>
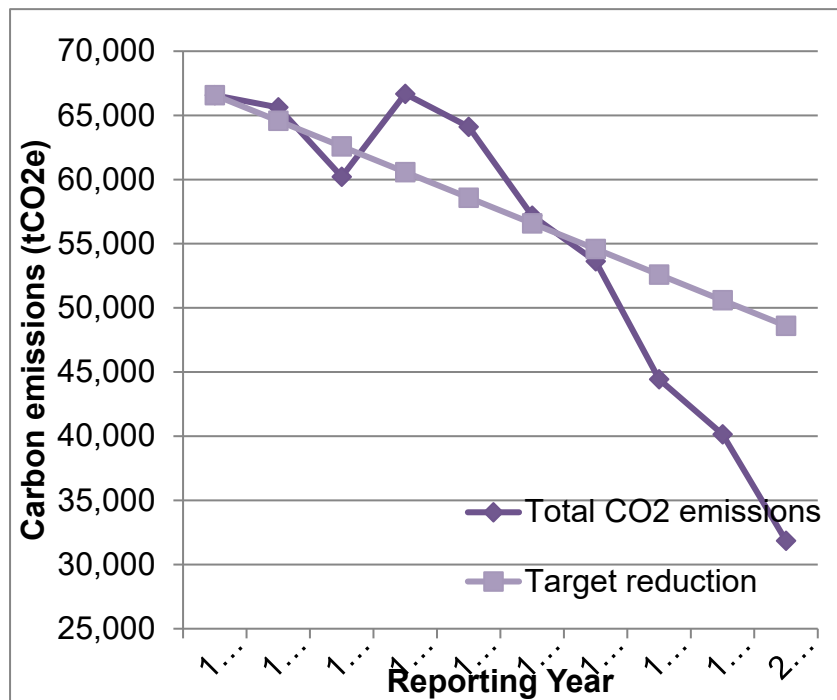
Total carbon emissions based on PBCCD emissions conversion factors (2011/12 – 2020/21)

5.5 Whilst it is the case that a significant proportion of the Council's reduction in emissions can be attributed to the greening of the electricity sector, several internal projects and initiatives have also significantly contributed to this. These include the following:-

- the replacement of sodium streetlights with LEDs. This has reduced the energy consumption from our streetlighting estate from 18.3MWh in 2011/12 to 11.2MWh in 2020/21;
- the widescale replacement of oil-fired boilers with renewable energy heating systems, which has reduced the carbon footprint from oil consumption from 11,219tCO$_2$e in 2011/12 to 4,391tCO$_2$e in 2019/20 – a 61% reduction.
- Solar PV deployment – through the Salix recycling fund, 2MW of solar PV panels have been installed across the Council's estate, reducing our annual reliance on grid supplied electricity by around 1.3m kWh, thus reducing our corporate carbon footprint whilst also removing some of the risk associated with increasing electricity costs.

5.6 However, it is recognised that the Council's electricity consumption remains its biggest single source of carbon emissions and the area which requires most work if the organisation is to achieve net zero emissions in the future.

Given that the cost of electricity continues to increase year on year, it is critical that the Council finds ways to either reduce its overall consumption of electricity, or to generate much more of its own renewable electricity; this is limited to a fairly significant extent because of grid capacity issues across much of the region. Fig. 2 below details the Council's energy consumption from 2011/12 through to 2020/21, whilst Fig.3 sets out the emissions from each of these sources:-

**Fig.2 – Energy Consumption 2011/12 – 2020/21**
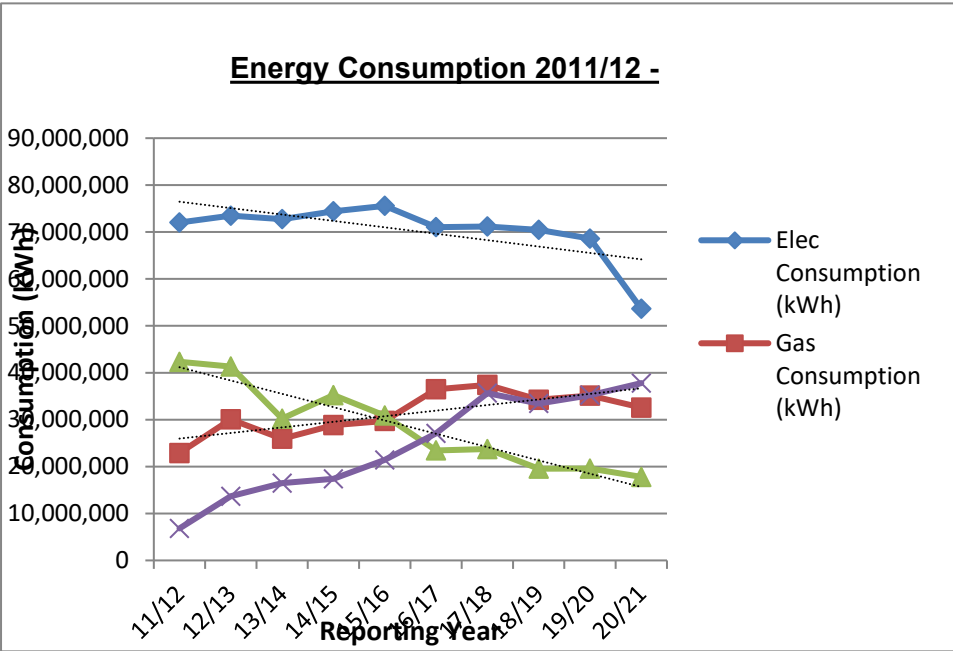
**Fig.3 - Carbon Emissions by Source**
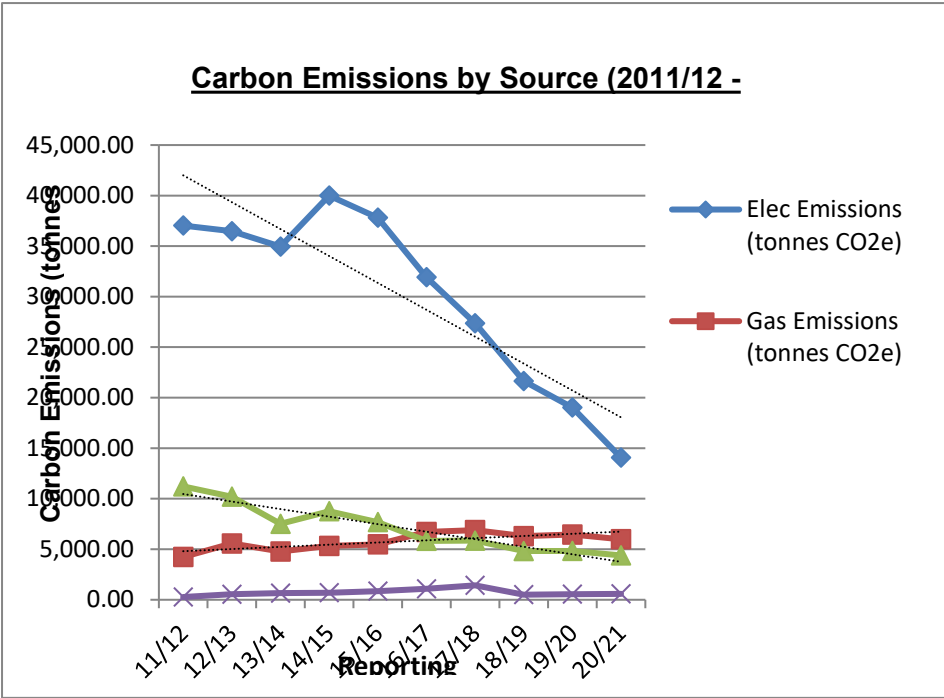
5.7 The annual PBCCD Report highlights at section 2F what the Council's priorities will be in respect of climate change governance, management and strategy throughout 2021/22. The ongoing Council restructure will provide an excellent opportunity for individual Services to take more of a lead in reducing cumulative energy consumption across the Council, and the new Net Zero Plan, which will be developed by a newly established Net Zero Strategy Group, will set out how this could be achieved over the coming years. It is anticipated that a hybrid model of working post-COVID-19 alongside a permanent rationalisation of the Council's built estate will be critical if net zero emissions are to be achieved.

Fig. 4 – Spend related to individual sectors 2011/12 – 2020/21
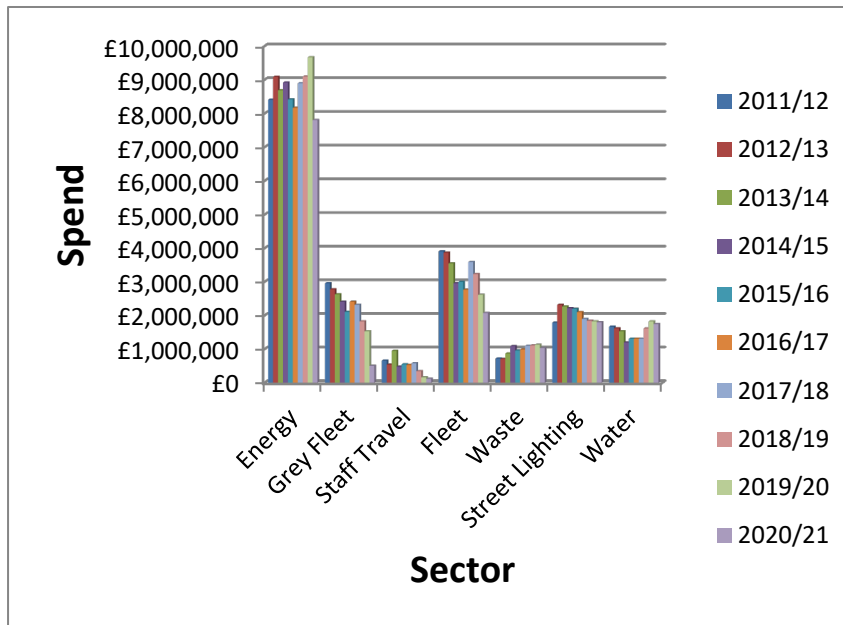
Fig. 5 – Spend & Emissions – All Sectors Total
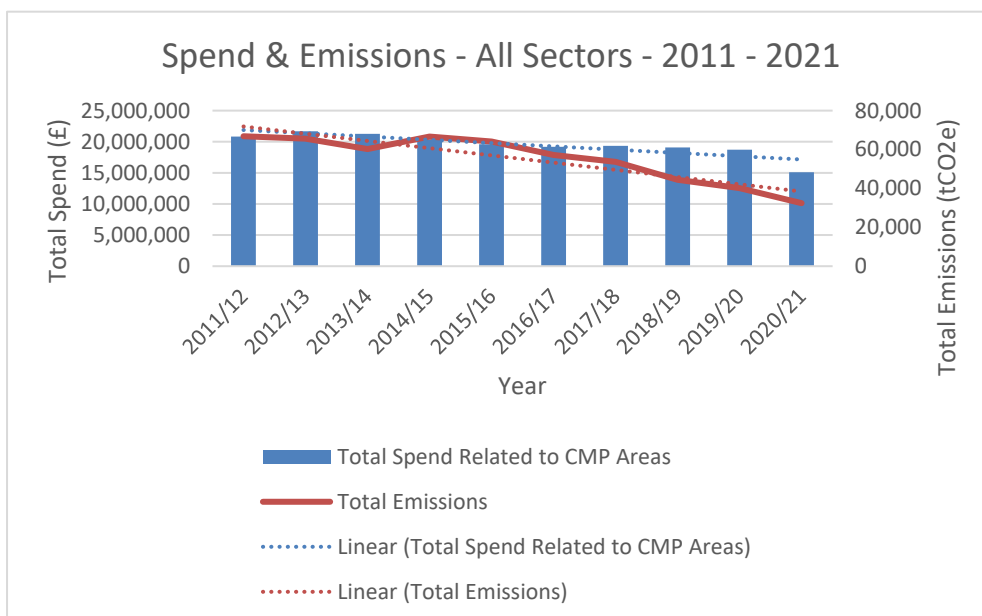
5.8 Looking ahead to next year's report, it is important to acknowledge the continued impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Council's carbon emissions for 2021/22. Lockdown and the requirements on staff to largely work from home will undoubtedly have had a positive impact on the associated emissions from the Council's consumption of energy, as well as from staff travel, fleet, waste, and water consumption. However, the requirement for increased ventilation and heating across the school estate alongside the onset of winter will undoubtedly lead to an increase in consumption, costs, and emissions – it is therefore imperative that both the school and non-school estate are managed efficiently and effectively over winter to ensure that they consume as little energy as possible and avoid unnecessary budget pressures.

6. National Policy Changes & Implications for The Highland Council

6.1 Action to mitigate against climate change is a key component of the Scottish Government's aim to create a growing, sustainable and inclusive economy. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019 set world-leading emissions reduction targets, including a binding target to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050. All public bodies in Scotland, including The Highland Council, are legally required to help deliver these targets.

6.2 In recognition of the increasing threat posed by Climate Change in May 2019, the Council declared a climate and ecological emergency, and the establishment of the Climate Change Working Group as a result has helped to expedite climate action across the organisation – details of this can be found throughout the appended report.

6.3 In September 2019, the Scottish Parliament passed the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, which sets more challenging emissions reduction targets, namely:-

- a 75% reduction by 2030 against a 1990 baseline; and
- a legally binding, net-zero target for **all greenhouse gases** by 2045

6.4 Further, and to ensure and monitor compliance with these revised targets, the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 ("the Order") came into force from November 2020. This order will require public bodies to include the following information in our annual reports, for the reporting year 2021/22:-

- where applicable, a target date for achieving **zero direct emissions** of greenhouse gases, or such other targets that demonstrate how the body is contributing to Scotland achieving its emissions reduction targets;
- where applicable, any targets **for reducing indirect emissions** of greenhouse gases;
- how the body **aligns its spending plans and use of resources** to contribute to reducing emissions and delivering its emissions reduction targets;
- how the body will publish, or otherwise make available, its **progress towards achieving its emissions reduction targets**; and
- how the body is **contributing to Scotland's Adaptation Programme**

6.5 As a result of these changes in legislation and following on from the Council's declaration of a climate and ecological emergency, there is a pressing need for the Council to re-examine its own targets around climate change. It is now essential that the Council sets a target date for net zero direct emissions from its internal operations, and this will require widescale engagement with both elected Members and senior officers to develop costed, evidence-based scenarios to allow a realistic target date to be set. The Climate Change Working Group, as well as the newly established Net Zero Strategy Group, will have a key role in supporting the requirements set out in the Order.

6.6 The need for robust adaptation to climate change also becomes increasingly important, given the likelihood of ever more frequent and extreme weather events as a result of "locked in" change due to historical emissions. As a public authority, the Council has a key role in preparing Highland for the likely impacts arising from climate change and to minimise impacts to service delivery. To this end, the Climate Change team has developed the *Highland Adapts* initiative with support from Adaptation Scotland and Climate Ready Clyde. *Highland Adapts* will deliver a place-based, partnership approach to climate change adaptation, in collaboration with partners including NHS Highland, NatureScot, Changeworks, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Forestry & Land Scotland and Zero Waste Scotland. Ultimately, it is anticipated that this will provide a mechanism to identify the key cross-cutting risks that climate change will pose in the coming years whilst developing a strategy and action plan to address these. However, there remains much work to do corporately to ensure that the Council is prepared and able to continue to deliver services in the face of the changing climate.

6.7 Nevertheless, it remains vitally important that the Council continues to do all it can to reduce its emissions, wherever feasible. Positively, many of the types of actions which are needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C are already underway at The Highland Council but need to be accelerated. There is a clear role for the Council to play through reducing energy use, being more energy efficient and expanding the scale of our renewable energy generation capacity. It is important to remember that the bulk of Council emissions come from consumption of energy, fuel, water, the production of waste etc, which all have an associated financial cost. Therefore, by reducing how much energy we consume or how much waste we produce, there is a net cost benefit as well as a net carbon benefit – policies and initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint mutually reinforce efforts to reduce overall spend across the organisation.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Performance & Governance

Date: 5 November 2021

Author: Keith Masson, Climate Change & Energy Team Manager

Annual Report under Public Sector Climate Change Duties, 2020/21

Required Section

1   Organisational Profile

1a   Name of reporting body – The Highland Council

1b   Type of body – Local Authority

**1c   Highest number of full-time equivalent staff in the body during the report year – ** 7,840

1d   Metrics used by the body Specify the metrics that the body uses to assess its performance in relation to climate change and sustainability.
N/A

1e   Overall budget of the body

£650,581,000 net revenue budget

1f   Report type – 2020/21 Financial Year

1g   Context Provide a summary of the body's nature and functions that are relevant to climate change reporting.

The Highland Council is a local authority in the north of Scotland, serving a largely rural and remote population. Inverness is the region's main population centre, and its only city. The Council is responsible for delivering a wide range of services to residents across the region, including education, leisure facilities, waste collections and social and welfare services.

The Highland Council area covers some 26,000 km² - a third of Scotland's landmass. The region has the 7th highest population of the 32 local authorities in Scotland.

The length of coastline including islands at low water is 4,905 kilometres, 21 per cent of the Scottish total, and excluding islands is 1,900 kilometres (49 per cent of Scotland). 68% of Highlands is peatlands. Forestry is one of the most extensive uses of land in Highland with a total woodland cover of about 310,000 hectares (13% of land area).

2   Governance, Management and Strategy

2a   How is climate change governed in the body?

The Highland Council's programme, Local Voices / Highland Choices 2017-2022, was updated in 2018/19. Under the theme, "A Place to Live", this programme identifies a key priority to "introduce a range of strategies and plans to support our commitment to sustainability, including phasing out single use plastics from Council sites and schools and developing solutions for residual waste treatment that will meet the requirements of the ban on landfilling Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW).

During 2020/21, the Council's progress towards mitigating and adapting to climate change was monitored through the Economy & Infrastructure Committee and the Climate Change Working Group, whilst each report presented to the Highland Council's strategic committees is required to identify all climate change implications.

The Climate Change Working Group has several specific functions:

1. To support and champion Highland's high-quality environment, biodiversity, air, land, water, food products and renewable energy resources to bring appropriate commercial opportunities, maximise income whilst raising awareness of the need to protect and enhance our critical environmental assets.
2. To be updated on the legislative, regulatory, policy and practice issues in relation to climate change, sustainability and biodiversity issues which impact The Highland Council, by Council officers and key partners.
3. To consider the development of a revised Carbon CLEVER vision for climate and ecological action that moves the Council's agenda beyond risk-based compliance towards a more truly low-carbon Council.
4. To propose new actions to achieve net zero by 2025, drawing out budgetary and other resource implications for the Council and wider Highland region.
5. To receive, scrutinise and comment on a new Climate Change Plan for The Highland Council.
6. To receive, scrutinise and comment on a new Energy Strategy & Action Plan for The Highland Council.
7. To scrutinise and comment on the work being progressed under the respective remits of the Energy & Renewables and Staff Travel Project Boards.
8. To consider and comment on responses to the Scottish Government and other relevant bodies regarding climate and ecological issues, including statutory reporting under Scotland's Public Bodies Climate Change Duties.
9. To consider how best to promote awareness of the need for climate and ecological action within the Council and amongst partner organisations including Community Planning Partners, the Highland Environment Forum, and where appropriate, the wider community in Highland.
10. To identify, support and champion climate and ecological progress across the Council whilst providing an appropriate level of critical challenge for the organisation.
11. To take evidence and consider specific Highland issues, for example, electrical grid constraints, which impact the Council's low carbon ambitions.

12. To consider and make recommendations to The Highland Council and / or any other appropriate strategic committee in relation to these matters, including any proposed changes or developments to Highland Council policy & strategy.

The Council introduced its first Carbon Management Plan in 2005, and in 2013, launched the Carbon CLEVER initiative. Carbon CLEVER sets a goal of a carbon neutral Inverness in a low carbon Highlands by 2025.

In April 2012, the Highland Council published its first climate change adaptation strategy for the Highland Region: "Adapting to Climate Change in Highland". This document was approved at a meeting of the Highland Council. The document gathered evidence, presented regional information, and equipped relevant decision makers with the appropriate tools to adapt to the effects of a changing climate. The document was developed in consultation with multiple stakeholders and with guidance and advice from Adaptation Scotland. Throughout 2020/21, significant progress has been made in respect of the establishment of a regional, place-based partnership approach to climate change adaptation - Highland Adapts – including the development of a 3-year operational plan and funding for a dedicated Project Manager. This initiative will bring organisations from across the region together to develop a unique approach to adapting to climate change. The initiative will be jointly resourced and rooted in a deep understanding of the needs and priorities of local communities, including the climate risks they face. The initiative will develop a strong evidence base that will be used to develop a shared adaption strategy and action plan which will embed action to adapt across organisational, community and sector plans, strategies and investments.

The Highland Council has eight services (see figure below). During 2020/21, the Council's Climate Change team merged with the Energy & Sustainability team to create a new Climate Change & Energy team (CCET) within the Infrastructure & Environment service. The CCET has developed a Strategic Control Plan (SCP) to help guide and develop its work, setting out a clear vision for its role within the Highland Council – https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/77674/item_6_ccet_strategic_control_plan.

The CCET is responsible for a variety of different functions, including; facilitating, reporting and promoting climate change actions across the Council, delivery of the Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme programme, the management of all utility billing and connections for the Council, the deployment of publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure across Highland, development of low carbon heat, hydrogen and fleet decarbonisation strategies, as well as project support and delivery in respect of property-related activity around the energy / low carbon agendas. The CCET sits within the Environment team in the Infrastructure & Environment Service and provides strategic and project support to all Council Services, where required. Reports on Climate Change and associated initiatives are generally taken to Economy & Infrastructure Committee. Ultimately, all Committees report back to full Council.

2b

On 9th May 2019 The Highland Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in recognition of the serious and accelerating changes to the world caused by climate change. The Council has established a Climate Change Working Group with responsibility for reporting back to full Council on the progress of internal and regional climate change action.

The Highland Council's Carbon Management Plan 2013 - 2020 (CMP) provides a framework for monitoring and reducing carbon emissions from the Council's internal operations. A number of key teams are responsible for taking actions to meet specific targets within the plan. The Climate Change & Energy Team (CCET) works collaboratively with services across the Council to develop and implement carbon reduction strategies. The Council is currently developing a new, overarching net zero strategy and action plan, with a view to developing more robust processes for embedding climate change action in the day-to-day operations of each individual Council service. This process has been assisted through a piece of work to better align the Council's policy and programmes with those of the Scottish Government in respect of the climate change agenda. This commissioned piece of work has identified 15 key actions the Council needs to take to improve its climate change performance, and will steer much of the ongoing work in developing a corporate net zero policy - https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/78267/4_climate_change_program_alignment.

The CCET has strategic oversight of The Highland Council's progress to reduce carbon emissions. The team acts as a centre of expertise on climate change for the Council and works collaboratively with teams from all eight Council services. Reports on climate change produced by the team are reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team, which includes the Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officers, before being presented to and scrutinised by the appropriate committee, for approval by Elected Members. Committee minutes are then approved by full Council. In 2010, the Council introduced mandatory climate change screenings for all committee papers, covering all committees and all subject matters. This was amended in 2013 to also incorporate any potential Climate Change/Carbon CLEVER implications.

The Highland Council has taken several steps to embed climate change action across the organisation, particularly through its Recovery and Transformation programme. As part of the 2021/22 budget setting process undertaken in March 2020, the Ambitious Highland Health & Prosperity Strategy 2021/22 was agreed by Members at full Council, which provides injections of funding to projects aimed at enhancing Highland infrastructure, economy, and wellbeing. 9 key projects and investments have been targeted, including climate change, but there are positive climate outcomes and dependencies linked to most of the other projects and these will be reported in detail through our 2021/22 PBCCD return.

In addition, various staff engagement and awareness activities were undertaken in 2020/21 including climate change and sustainability training for new staff (our Green Ambassador network was refreshed and re-branded as the Eco Officer network early in 2018), an annual programme of events and campaigns focused on climate change including Earth Hour, Cycle to Work Week, Climate Conversations sessions with staff, behaviour change initiatives on energy saving, waste and transport through our Green Impact and Energy Sparks programmes, and national campaigns including Climate Week. The Eco Officers network, as well as students from the University of the Highlands and Islands, have played a key role in the adoption of Students Organising for Sustainability's Green Impact Tool. This tool helps to incentivise and measure sustainability "actions" by Council employees. We have also introduced an annual TRIAD-management campaign encouraging all staff to reduce their energy consumption in a bid to reduce the overall energy cost.

2c   Does the body have specific climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives in its corporate plan or similar document?

Wording of objective	Name of document
Develop a new Carbon Management Plan in collaboration with partners to revise corporate emission reduction targets by December 2018	Corporate Plan
Develop a Highland-wide Climate Change Adaptation Strategy with Community Planning Partners	Corporate Plan
Reduce energy consumption across the Council's estate (electricity, natural gas, oil)	Corporate Plan
Council carbon emissions tonnes CO2e	Corporate Plan

2d   Does the body have a climate change plan or strategy? If yes, provide the name and/or link to any such document.

The Council adopted its first Carbon Management Plan in 2005/6, and its third iteration, the Carbon Management Plan 2013-2020, was adopted in 2013. It expanded on the ambition and scope of the previous two plans, including setting more ambitious carbon reduction targets (3% emissions reduction per year), and targeting a wider range of emissions both from internal Council emissions, as well as reporting on community-wide emissions from Council houses and municipal waste (although reduction targets are not set against these). This focused attention has helped to embed climate change awareness across the Council. Ultimately, over the lifetime of this CMP, the Council reduced its annual emissions from 63,374tCO$_2$e in its baseline year of 2011/12, to 40,145tCO$_2$e in 2019/20 – a reduction of 23,229tCO$_2$e or 37%, and over 10,000tCO$_2$e lower than the ambition set out within the CMP.

Work is now underway to develop a corporate net zero strategy and action plan, setting out how the Council will directly support Scottish Government's ambition to end Scotland's contribution to climate change no later than 2045.

2e **Does the body have any plans or strategies covering the following areas that include climate change?** Provide the name of any such document and the timeframe covered.

Topic area	Name of document	Time period	Comments
Adaptation	Adapting to climate change in Highland	2012-2020	The Highland Adapts initiative, developed by The Highland Council, was officially launched in 2020/21, and will deliver a place-based, partnership approach to climate change adaptation in Highland.
Business Travel	Carbon Management Plan Travel & Subsistence Policy	2013-2020 2018 onwards	T&S policy has been updated to reflect increased ambition from Scottish Government re low carbon travel as well as budgetary pressures facing the Council.
Staff Travel	Carbon Management Plan	2013-2020	As above.
Energy efficiency	Carbon Management Plan	2013-2020	As above.
Fleet Transport	Carbon Management Plan	2013-2020	As above.
Information and communication technology	Carbon Management Plan	2013-2020	As above.
Renewable energy	Carbon Management Plan	2013-2020	Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance adopted November 2016
Sustainable/renewable heat	Carbon Management Plan	2013-2020	As above.
Waste management	Carbon Management Plan	2013-2020	As above.
Water and sewerage	Carbon Management Plan	2013-2020	As above.
Land Use	Highland wide Local Development Plan, adopted 2012 (review currently on hold awaiting NPF4); Highland Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy to 2050	various	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/23582/highland_indicative_regional_spatial_strategy_to_2050_-_refined

	Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan, adopted 2015 (currently being reviewed) Land allocations within extant Local Plans including: • West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan, 2019; • Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan 2018 • Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan, 2007; • Wester Ross Local Plan, June 2006; and • Local Flood Risk Management Plan for the Highland & Argyll Local Plan District (LPD01), and Findhorn, Nairn & Speyside Local Plan District (LPD05) (2016 to 2022). Various topic based Supplementary Guidance (Including Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance 2016 and Addendum Supplementary Guidance: 'Part 2b' 2017) and Site-Specific Development Briefs. Growing Our Future – food growing strategy for Highland		
Other			

2f   What are the body's top 5 priorities for climate change governance, management and strategy for the year ahead? Provide a brief summary of the organisation's areas and activities of focus for the year ahead.

Priority 1: Develop a new Net Zero Plan which reflects the announcement of a climate and ecological emergency by both the Scottish Government and the Highland Council. This plan should take into account the Highland Council's carbon emissions reduction targets and the challenging financial situation currently facing the Council, particularly in regard to the "green recovery" from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Priority 2: Establish a Net Zero Officers Working Group, to provide a clear internal governance structure for climate action and to lead on the development of the corporate net zero strategy and action plan.

Priority 3: Asset Rationalisation / New ways of Working – use of energy in the Council's built estate accounts for around 75% of the total carbon footprint of the organisation. A programme of work to rationalise the Council's offices and develop improved ways of delivering services is currently underway through the Transformation Programme - given that energy prices are increasing year-on-year, there is a pressing need for the Climate Change & Energy Team to work collaboratively with the Asset Rationalisation team to ensure that the future retained estate is fit for purpose in respect of service delivery, but also has the capability of achieving net zero standards.

Priority 4: Development of Low Carbon Heat and Hydrogen strategies - development of corporately agreed hydrogen & low carbon heat strategies to ensure the Council benefits from the energy-systems transformation that these technologies will bring to the region. Ensuring that opportunities within the capital programme are maximised in respect of delivering carbon reduction for both the Council and wider region.

Priority 5: Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy & Action Plan – the Council now has a dedicated officer working to develop the corporate approach to decarbonising our light commercial fleet by 2025, and our heavy goods fleet by 2030 in line with Scottish Government ambition. It is anticipated that the strategy to achieve this will be published in 2021/22.

2g   Has the body used the Climate Change Assessment Tool (a) or equivalent tool to self-assess its capability / performance? If yes, please provide details of the findings of the self-assessment.
(a)This refers to the tool developed by Resource Efficient Scotland for self-assessing an organisation's capability / performance in relation to climate change.

The Climate Change team conducted trial of the CCAT tool in 2015. A session using the tool to assess the Council's climate change performance to date was held with the Senior Management Team in May 2018. This was a useful exercise in terms identifying priorities for a new Climate Change Plan, as well as where the organisation is performing poorly.

The Council scored relatively well in respect of governance, which reflected the commitment of the Senior Management Team and the organisation as a whole to achieving the targets set out in the previous CMP. In addition, systems in respect of the collation of emissions data are robust, with all statutory and voluntary reporting being up-to-date. However, it is recognised that this could be used more effectively for communication.

Carbon reduction targets are reviewed annually as part of the carbon reporting process, and this is used by the Climate Change & Energy Team in collaboration with colleagues to identify key priority areas, projects and initiatives to improve overall performance in the next reporting year. However, it is proposed that, going forward, an annual CCAT review is used to widen the scope of the performance improvement process.

There are also key strengths within the adaptation and behaviour sections. A Highland-wide approach to adaptation through the Community Planning Partnership is currently being developed, whilst the Eco Officer network will play a vital role in embedding low carbon practices in offices throughout the region.

The overall scores for emissions, behaviour and procurement were low. In preparing a new Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan (NZSAP), it will be necessary to revisit overall emissions reduction targets as well as projects in the pipeline, whilst also recalculating business as usual forecasts. Developing a robust Project Register, updated regularly by key teams across the organisation, is also an important next step.

In addition, governance arrangements around carbon management will be fundamental in the new NZSAP to ensure progress is measured and managed more effectively across the Council. Internal communication and engagement of Members, management and staff has also been identified as a key area requiring further development. Key successes in respect of good carbon management, with associated financial benefits, should be communicated more frequently and more effectively. This will pave the way for better staff engagement and grassroots activity through the Eco Officer network to identify and implement further carbon reduction actions.

2h **Supporting information and best practice.** Provide any other relevant supporting information and any examples of best practice by the organisation in relation to governance, management and strategy.

A set of Terms of Reference for the Climate Change Working Group ensure best practice in strategic oversight of climate change workstreams. These terms of reference describe the working group as a consultative forum which provides advice and guidance on the climate, ecological and environmental sustainability agenda across the Highland Councils estate.

In November 2020, following the recruitment of the new Climate Change & Energy Team Manager, a project team was assembled to develop and produce a Strategic Control Plan; a significant piece of strategic work which has sought to understand previous shortcomings and challenge past behaviours in order to enable a refreshed approach to be taken towards the team's role within the Council, the development of conceptual projects, and applications for funding.

The overarching aim of the Strategic Control Plan is the application of structure and control to the project development and funding bid process, with three pieces of interdependent work undertaken in developing the plan:

1. Vision: a point of reference – something to substantiate our proposals and bids
2. Structure: pragmatic governance with appropriate control, support and scrutiny (including performance management)
3. Funding: shaping funding opportunities for the climate change and energy agendas through effective relationships and credible project proposals

The overarching vision for the team, as set out in the Strategic Control Plan, is as follows:

"We will influence and support positive change for the Highlands by progressing the Council's climate change agenda, striving to achieve net zero emissions through a targeted reduction in energy consumption and spend across our services, whilst also building our climate resilience.

Our ambition is for The Highland Council to become one of the most energy efficient & climate-ready Councils in Scotland."

The Highland Council has been successful in securing £3.5m in match funding from Salix, giving the Council a total of £7m. This is not only the largest fund ever awarded through Salix in Scotland but is also the largest ever awarded to a Local Authority in the UK. This award will provide essential funds to enable officers to proactively prioritise initiatives that reduce the organisation's carbon emissions. Furthermore, the recycling nature of the fund means savings are ring fenced to be further invested in energy saving projects. Not only will this fund drive long term sustainability, but it will also support economic growth in Highland through the continued use of trusted local contractors.

In November 2020, the Council hosted an online Highland Climate Change Conference, which had the theme of "addressing the climate and ecological emergency and working towards a green recovery." The conference featured 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 OBE (Chairman of North Highland Initiative), Lord Thurso (Chairman of Visit Scotland), Graham Neville (Area Manager, Northern Isles and North Highland of NatureScot) and David Richardson (Development Manager – Highlands and Islands, Federation of Small Businesses).

A suite of workshops were held examining specific themes including biodiversity & habitat and personal responsibility, and over 150 people attended over the course of the conference.

The Council has continued to pursue workstreams which reduce reliance on grey fleet and personal car use by staff. Workshops have been held with both officers and Councillors to identify the vision, values and focus areas for the Electric Vehicle Strategic Control Plan. The introduction of Enterprise Car Club to The Highland Council has been successful in reducing corporate emissions by almost 1,000 tonnes of CO_2 to date and saving £400,000 in its first year of operation. This represents a 15% reduction in overall business travel costs, consisting of a 22% drop in grey fleet mileage and an overall drop of business mileage of 13%. The Enterprise Car Club consists of ~80 vehicles located across 21 Highland Council offices, with the majority of them being electric or plug-in hybrids.

In tandem with the introduction of this car club scheme has been further development on remote working capacity for staff members. The adoption of Microsoft Teams has made remote working easier, with the COVID-19 pandemic providing opportunities for many staff members to attend meetings and collaborate remotely. Remote working removes the emissions associated with commuting to offices and meetings.

The Council in collaboration with NUS has introduced the award-winning sustainability tool "Green Impact". The introduction of this tool has provided a useful framework for sustainability action within the Council and has multiple wellbeing, cost saving and social benefits.

In 2020, the Council published the first greenhouse gas baseline inventory report for the whole Highland region. This provided the Council with a thorough assessment of the carbon sources and sinks throughout the region, which can now be used to develop an evidence-based policy approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation across the region.

Again, in 2020, the Council commissioned and published a report setting out the key steps required to better align its programme with the Scottish Government around the low carbon agenda, with particular focus on areas where the Council could best position itself to attract external funding to support low carbon projects. This work will be used to influence governance arrangements of the Net Zero Strategy Group and the development of our corporate Net Zero Strategy.

3   Emissions, Targets and Projects

3a   Emissions from start of the year which the body uses as a baseline (for its carbon footprint) to the end of the report year.

Reference year	Year	Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3	Total	Units
Baseline	2011/12	24,913	37,031	4,635	66,579	tCO$_2$e
Year 1	2012/13	25,218	38,234	4,218	67,670	tCO$_2$e
Year 2	2013/14	21,024	37,858	4,519	63,401	tCO$_2$e
Year 3	2014/15	20,847	38,722	4,274	63,843	tCO$_2$e
Year 4	2015/16	22,629	39,323	4,088	66,040	tCO$_2$e
Year 5	2016/17	20,899	36,969	4,153	62,021	tCO$_2$e
Year 6	2017/18	21,226	24,983	7,416	53,625	tCO$_2$e
Year 7	2018/19	19,849	19,946	5,281	45,076	tCO$_2$e
Year 8	2019/20	18,493	17,533	4,596	40,622	tCO$_2$e
Year 9	2020/21	16,593	12,504	3,307	32,404	tCO$_2$e

3b **Breakdown of emission sources.** Complete the following table with the breakdown of emission sources from the body's most recent carbon footprint (greenhouse gas inventory); this should correspond to the last entry in the table in 3(a) above. Use the 'Comments' column to explain what is included within each category of emission source entered in the first column. If, for any such category of emission source, it is not possible to provide a simple emission factor(a) leave the field for the emission factor blank and provide the total emissions for that category of emission source in the 'Emissions' column.

Emission source	Scope	Consumption data	Units	Emission factor	Units	Emissions (tCO$_2$e)	Comments
Grid Electricity (generation)	Scope 2	42,456,452	kWh	0.23314	kg CO2e/kWh	9,898.3	Buildings
Grid Electricity (generation)	Scope 2	11,178,296	kWh	0.23314	kg CO2e/kWh	2,606.1	Street lighting
Natural Gas	Scope 1	32,557,446	kWh	0.18387	kg CO2e/kWh	5,986.3	Space heating
Burning Oil (Kerosene)	Scope 1	17,806,305	kWh	0.24666	kg CO2e/kWh	4,392.1	Space heating
Petrol (average biofuel blend)	Scope 1	82,872	litres	2.16802	kg CO2e/litre	179.7	Fleet use
Diesel (average biofuel blend)	Scope 1	1,947,268	litres	2.54603	kg CO2e/litre	4,957.8	Fleet use
Gas Oil	Scope 1	178,692	litres	2.75776	kg CO2e/litre	492.8	Winter Gritting fleet
Biomass (wood chips)	Scope 1	37,793,731	kWh	0.01545	Kg CO2e/kWh	583.9	Space heating
Water – Supply	Scope 3	510,803	m3	0.11	kg CO2e/m3	56.2	Water to all buildings.
Water – Treatment	Scope 3	459,747	m3	0.23	kg CO2e/m3	105.7	Water to all buildings.
Refuse Municipal to Landfill	Scope 3	480	tonnes	437.372	kg CO2e/tonne	210	Waste to landfill – non schools

Refuse Municipal to Landfill	Scope 3	1,485	tonnes	437.372	kg CO2e/tonne	649	Waste to landfill – schools
Mixed recycling	Scope 3	97	tonnes	21.317	kg CO2e/tonne	2	Recycling – non schools
Mixed recycling	Scope 3	339	tonnes	21.317	kg CO2e/tonne	7	Recycling – schools
Organic Garden Waste Composting	Scope 3	29	tonnes	10.2	kg CO2e/tonne	0.3	Mixed composting – non-schools
Organic Garden Waste Composting	Scope 3	108	tonnes	10.2	kg CO2e/tonne	1.1	Mixed composting – schools
Average Car – Unknown Fuel	Scope 3	1,281,159	miles	0.2757	kg CO2e/mile	353.2	Grey fleet mileage – based on average value as only mileage is recorded on expenses claims
Average Car – Unknown Fuel	Scope 3	38,784	miles	0.2757	kg CO2e/mile	10.7	Car hire mileage – based on average value as only mileage is recorded.
Car – hybrid (average) mileage	Scope 3	245,179	Miles	0.18601	kg CO2e/mile	45.6	Car club mileage
Bus (local bus, not London)	Scope 3	4,840	passenger km	0.1195	kg CO2e/passenger km	1	Coach and bus staff travel
Ferry (average passenger)	Scope 3	2,325	passenger km	0.11286	kg CO2e/passenger km	0.3	Staff travel
Short-haul flights (average passenger)	Scope 3	33,643	passenger km	0.2443	kg CO2e/passenger km	8.2	Staff travel

Rail (National rail)	Scope 3	30,172	passenger km	0.03694	kg CO2e/passenger km	1.1	Staff travel
Taxi (regular)	Scope 3	0	passenger km	0.14549	kg CO2e/passenger km	0	Staff travel
Grid Electricity (transmission & distribution losses)	Scope 3	42,456,452	kWh	0.02005	kg CO2e/kWh	851.3	Buildings
Grid Electricity (transmission & distribution losses)	Scope 3	11,178,296	kWh	0.02005	kg CO2e/kWh	224.1	Street Lighting
Homeworking Emissions	Scope 3	2,600 (33% of 7,840 FTE)	Percentage of total FTEs home-based	0.3	tCO2e/FTE/annum	780	Homeworking
					Total	32,404	

3c   **Generation, consumption and export of renewable energy**

Technology	Renewable Electricity		Renewable Heat		Comments
Technology	Total consumed by the organisation (kWh)	Total exported (kWh)	Total consumed by the organisation (kWh)	Total exported (kWh)	

Wind	10,000				Unmetered solution for off-grid school. Estimate, based on expected generation for size of turbine.
Solar PV	1,681,280	186,809			Consumed - estimates based on data where available. Exported - estimated at 10% of total generation
Biomass			37,854,301		22.4MW generating capacity. Actual consumption data.
Biogas CHP	Data not available				414.5kW generating capacity.
Air Source Heat Pump			1,539,208		460.5kW generating capacity. Estimate, based on heat pump sites where consumption is regularly measured
Ground Source Heat Pump			157,354		Estimate, based on heat pump sites where consumption is regularly measured.
Solar Thermal			Data not available		47.5kW generating capacity

3d Targets

List all of the body's targets of relevance to its climate change duties. Where applicable, overall carbon targets and any separate land use, energy efficiency, waste, water, information and communication technology, transport, travel and heat targets should be included.

Name of Target	Type of Target	Units	Boundary / Scope of Target	Progress Against Target	Year used as Baseline	Baseline figure	Units of Baseline	Target Completion Year	Comments	Targets
Carbon Management Plan	Annual	Annual % reduction	All emissions	Achieved	2011/12	66,579	tCO2e	2019/20		
Carbon CLEVER	Absolute	Total % reduction	All emissions		2014/15			2024/25		

3e   Estimated total annual carbon savings from all projects implemented by the organisation in the report year

If no projects were implemented against an emissions source, enter "0".
If the organisation does not have any information for an emissions source, enter "Unknown".
If the organisation does not include the emissions source in its carbon footprint, enter "N/A".

Emissions source	Total estimated annual carbon savings (tCO$_2$e)	Comments
Electricity	474	Various projects were implemented to reduce carbon emissions in this area, and these have successfully reduced consumption. Including the 'self-supply' to our building via the Solar PV programme - £2.3m self-financing investment across the estate totalling over 2.4MW of generation over >30 sites.
Natural gas		Projects were successfully implemented to move away from oil to this lower carbon fossil fuel.
Other heating fuels	50	Projects were successfully implemented to reduce carbon emissions in this area, primarily replacing oil-fired heating systems with biomass boilers. There has been an associated decrease in usage, as a result.
Business Travel		New ICT contract and telephony solutions including Skype for Business has reduced the requirement for business travel as users are now able to more readily utilise video conference (VC) and share documents live with colleagues and others. In addition, the Council's grey fleet project has led to the introduction of lower carbon alternatives to private vehicle use, including the roll-out of hybrid car club vehicles at various key locations.
Fleet transport		Route optimisation, installation of new Euro 6 engines, reduction of service provision. Fleet reductions and minimisation of gritting routes have resulted in carbon savings. A review of the Council's white fleet as well as the development of a fleet decarbonisation strategy will be undertaken throughout 2021/22 and 2022/23.
Total	**524**	

3f   Provide details of up to 10 projects implemented in the reporting year which are estimated to achieve the highest carbon savings.

Project name	Funding source	First full year of CO2e savings	Are these savings figures estimated or actual?	Capital cost (£)	Operational cost (£/annum)	Project lifetime (years)	Primary fuel/emission source saved	Estimated carbon savings per year (tCO2e)
Rose Street Multi Story Car Park LED	Salix	2020/21	Actual	£86,942		25 years	Grid electricity	136
Culloden Academy PV	Capital Borrowing	2020/21	Actual	£156,456		25 years	Grid electricity	35
Inverness Leisure – Sports Hall LED	Salix	2020/21	Actual	£76,378		25 years	Grid electricity	32
Grantown Grammar School PV	Capital Borrowing	2020/21	Actual	£145,216		25 years	Grid electricity	31
Thurso High School LED	Salix	2020/21	Actual	£217,245		25 years	Grid electricity	30
St Joseph's Primary School Boiler Replacement	Capital Budget/Salix	2020/21	Actual	£63,165		25 years	Oil to gas	24
Aviemore Primary School PV	Capital Borrowing	2020/21	Actual	£102,919		25 years	Grid electricity	23
Raigmore Primary School Boiler Replacement	Capital Budget/Salix	2020/21	Actual	£90,297		25 years	Oil to gas	20
Averon Leisure LED	Salix	2020/21	Actual	£32,906		25 years	Grid electricity	19
Kingussie High School LED	Salix	2020/21	Actual	£125,828		25 years	Grid electricity	18

3g   Estimated decrease or increase in emissions from other sources in the report year

If the organisation's corporate emissions increased or decreased for any other reason in the report year, provide an estimate of the amount and direction.

Emissions source	Total estimated annual emissions (tCO₂e)	Increase or decrease in emissions	Comments
Estate changes			
Service provision			
Estate Changes			
Estate changes			

3h   Anticipated annual carbon savings from all projects implemented by the organisation in the year ahead

Emissions source	Total estimated annual carbon savings (tCO₂e)	Comments
Electricity	1,103	LED lighting upgrades via Salix (Phase 2)

LED lighting upgrades via Salix (Phase 2)

- 50 sites
- Estimated kWh saving: >1m
- Estimated # of fittings: >11,000
- Estimated cost: £1.64m

LED lighting upgrades via Salix (Leisure Facilities)

- 21 sites
- Estimated kWh saving: >400,000
- Estimated # of fittings: >100
- Estimated cost: £391,500

Street lighting replacement scheme (pending BC approval)

- 21 wards
- Estimated kWh saving: >3m
- Estimated # of fittings: >14,000
- Estimated cost: >£3m
- Business Case development stage

River Ness Hydro

This £2.55m project will deliver a 92kW 'Archimedes Screw' hydroelectric scheme and interactive visitor experience on the River Ness. The River Ness Hydro will provide a multitude of benefits to Inverness City and the wider Highland region, including but not limited to:
- Carbon savings of 142 tonnes CO2e per annum that will help the Council meet ambitious Climate and Ecological Emergency targets;
- Generating and supplying ~50% of the electricity demand to Inverness Leisure Centre – one of the highest consuming buildings in Highland Council's estate.
- Completion date of March 7th 2022"

Natural gas	In a conscious move to reduce oil consumption there is a move to natural gas if a renewable energy source is not currently viable or available.
Other heating fuels	5 boiler sites identified with priority need - switch from oil > gas with a view to adopting a greener solution in the future. Wider work underway to rationalise the estate and adopt new ways of working, after which further funding can be directed to the decarbonisation of heat across the retained estate.
Multiple	Further 5 pilot sites identified for BMS upgrades – lessons learned and finding will inform wider programme of which £1m has been earmarked notionally through the Salix RF. Pilot site completion date by EOFY 2021/22.
Business Travel	Reduction in emissions from staff travel expected via reduction in overall travel, and continued shift of grey fleet mileage onto EV / petrol hybrid fleet and car club vehicles.

Fleet transport		Route optimisation, more efficient vehicles and equipment. A review of the Council's fleet is currently underway, alongside preparation of a fleet decarbonisation strategy, which it is hoped will reduce the overall size of the fleet whilst converting vehicles to hybrids / EVs wherever feasible.
ICT Equipment		Rollout of more efficient ICT software and equipment.
Total	**1,103**	

3i   Estimated decrease or increase in emissions from other sources in the year ahead

If the organisation's corporate emissions are likely to increase or decrease for any other reason in the year ahead, provide an estimate of the amount and direction.

Emissions source	Total estimated annual emissions (tCO$_2$e)	Increase or decrease in emissions	Comments
Estate changes		decrease	The programme of office rationalisation is on-going, and this is likely to be expedited as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is expected that there will be significant carbon savings once these projects are completed although these savings have not yet been quantified.
Service provision		decrease	The Council is committed to pursuing its 'digital first' communication priority scheme to reduce the number of visits to service centres. This will help reduce carbon emissions relating to in-person visits and staffing requirements at service points, but this has not been quantified.

Officers and Elected Members can also now video conference into many committees, removing the requirement to attend in person, which significantly reduces both grey fleet mileage and public transport costs / associated emissions.

3j **Total carbon reduction project savings since the start of the year which the body uses as a baseline for its carbon footprint**
If the body has data available, estimate the total emissions savings made from projects since the start of that year ("the baseline year").

Total savings	Total estimated emissions savings (tCO$_2$e)	Comments
Total project savings since baseline year	-	We do not currently capture this data.

3k   Supporting information and best practice

The Highland Council has developed and implemented several projects aimed at targeting climate change across the organisation. Many of these projects seek to achieve cost reductions as well as carbon savings. Recognising the significance of energy use on corporate carbon emissions, the £3.5m interest free loan from Salix, alongside the programme Carbon Saving Capital Works for Council Buildings and Properties seeks to replace expensive, carbon-intensive oil-fired and electric heating systems with low carbon alternatives, and this work continued throughout 2020/21 albeit at a reduced pace as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are now multiple systems in place, generating an income of approximately £1.8m per year for the Council through Renewable Heat Incentive payments. The leadership the Council has shown in developing and championing renewable technologies has helped to create a sustainable supply chain in Highland for these systems.

The programme to replace sodium streetlights with more energy efficient LEDs continues to produce significant carbon and cost savings. The Highland-wide roll-out of LED streetlights is part of a 5-year programme, due to be completed in 2021/22 with 90% of lighting columns being converted which will result in a 50% reduction in electricity consumption. Reducing electricity consumption and moving all properties towards automated metering (some properties are still on estimated supplies), will enable better reporting support more targeted behaviour change interventions across the estate.

Staff engagement and involvement on climate change issues has also been a key focus of work for 2020/21, which has been principally led by the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG). The CCWG provides a forum to highlight the range of work being undertaken across the Council by multiple teams in respect of the climate change agenda, and as the reports are publicly accessible, scrutiny of the Council's actions becomes much easier. Further, several key public and private sector partners have been given an opportunity to present to the CCWG, updating Members on key actions and projects which are addressing climate issues locally and nationally.

4   Adaptation

4a   Has the body assessed current and future climate-related risks?

The Highland Council produced the Adapting to Climate Change in Highland report in 2012. This report contained an assessment of the potential risks and benefits of different climate change scenarios on the Highlands, as well as identifying priority action areas.

The Highland Council considers current and future climate-related risks in several of its development and planning processes, primarily using UKCP18 climate change scenarios to predict changes to various risks to new developments and current infrastructure. Areas of focus include flood risk management, coastal and marine planning, and sustainable design, which all have specific planning guidelines and supplementary guidance associated with them aimed at assessing future sustainability as part of the planning process.

There are other strategies in place for managing risk which may or may not include climate-related risks. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service prepares a Regional Risk Register and the Highlands, and Islands Regional and Local Partnerships work in collaboration to plan and prepare for the consequence management of and response to any emergencies and events because of these risks. The resilience response focuses on the consequences, rather than the cause. Specific agencies have responsibility for dealing with specific aspects of risk - for example, SEPA manages the preparation of flood maps and mitigation for flooding. The Regional Risk Register covers several areas which could be affected by climate change; for example, an increase in winter storms could mean an increased number of power outages in rural communities, or dry spells could result in water shortages.

The Highland Council is currently working with community planning partners to resource a place-based approach to adaptation in Highland, with the title Highland Adapts. An outline business case and operational plan were completed for the Highland Adapts initiative in 2019/20, with the partnership formally established in 2020/21. The initiative now has several committed partners including The Highland Council, NatureScot, NHS Highland, Zero Waste Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Forestry and Land Scotland, Home Energy Scotland, Changeworks and SNIFFER. Each partner has provided a financial contribution which has funded the recruitment of a Principal Project Manager who will start in May 2021.

There is a clear strategic need for the Highland Adapts initiative to be established both region-wide, and corporately within The Highland Council. This is confirmed by the increasing emergence of climate impacts affecting the region, legislative requirements to adapt and strong support for joint action among organisations and individuals.

The outline operational plan for Highland Adapts is comprised of three work packages, which will be completed over the first three years of the initiative:

1. Governance, leadership and communication - Governance arrangements for the Highland Adapts initiative will be further developed and finalised during the first six months of operation. This will include establishing a programme board and scoping options for community involvement which could include setting up a Highland-wide network of adaptation champions.
2. Understanding the challenge - A risk and opportunity assessment is required in order to identify the climate risks and opportunities that will affect the Highlands up to the end of the century and highlight areas where action is needed in the next five years to prepare the ground for these changes, from both an infrastructure and built environment perspective as well as capacity building for change. The assessment must identify Highland-wide risks and also take account of the variation in risks and opportunities across different communities, places and landscapes.
3. Planning and implementation - The main planning and implementation phase of the Highland Adapts initiative will take place following completion of the risk and opportunity assessment. The governance established to run the Highland Adapts initiative and the engagement process used to develop the risk and opportunity assessment will build understanding, trust and a shared vision and sense of urgency among partners. The planning and implementation phase will build on this work and will identify priority actions that multiple partners are able to commit to. This phase is likely to involve developing a regional adaptation strategy and action plan and will be agreed by Highland Adapts partners at a later stage.

4b   What arrangements does the organisation have in place to manage climate-related risks?

There are two components that need to work together to effectively manage climate-related risks, namely future forecasting and prediction of potential climate-related impacts based on best available climate modelling, accompanied by developing strategies to manage these long-term risks and acute or emergency response plans to immediate impacts/threats. From its role as a planning authority, the Highland Council takes steps to manage climate-related risks from new developments and to existing infrastructure. This is primarily managed for new developments through the planning process and particularly the policies contained in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan, a review of which has commenced. The Council's recent planning response (particularly during 2020-21) has included the preparation of an Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy for Highland, policy submissions to Scottish Government to inform preparation of National Planning Framework 4 and continuing the development of some new policies through the review of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan, these strategies and policies having a greater climate emergency focus.

Reviews of the risks to existing infrastructure are carried out on a per project basis, with the support of relevant Council services such as the Flood Risk Management Team as well as external partners such as SEPA. Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance released in November 2016 assists with identifying and designing onshore wind energy projects that can be supported through planning and hence are more likely to gain consent, be implemented and contribute towards renewable energy targets. The Highland Council continues to add further guidance to it through a continuing programme of landscape sensitivity appraisals and identification of strategic capacity. The Flood Risk Management Team manages a dynamic risk-based system of watercourse inspections and implements remedial / maintenance works as necessary to reduce flooding. Monthly targets for priority inspections are met and monitored using performance indicators, and the development of our first Local Flood Risk Management Plan is complete. The publication of our Local Flood Risk Management Plan in June 2016 has helped to raise awareness of flood risk in communities and the riparian responsibilities towards watercourse maintenance. Community Councils have been informed of the publication and further initiatives to raise awareness and increase resilience in communities which will be developed over coming years. Mid-term and end of the plan cycle (every 6 years) reporting on progress will follow publication. The Local Flood Risk Management Plan (LFRMP) has also identified high risk areas where the development of a Flood Protection Study (leading to a Flood Protection Scheme) should be carried out.

The Infrastructure & Environment Service is delivering Flood Protection Studies in accordance with the LFRMP, considering climate change scenarios when assessing future flood risk. Development of a Highland-wide Surface Water Management Plan (2016-2022) will assess surface water flooding issues in the highest priority areas, prior to the next Plan publication in 2022. The Highland Council makes use of Scottish Government's initial 'Dynamic Coast' research at a strategic level within the current review of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan as one of several data sources informing which sites to prefer for development and has taken an active interest in the second phase of research. The Pilot Pentland Firth & Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan was published in March 2016. It was a collaboration between Marine Scotland, the Highland Council and Orkney Islands Council. Its policies include flooding, well-being and quality of life and amenity of coastal communities. It identifies resilience to climate change as one of its key overarching objectives. It provided guidance for the subsequent, proposed eleven statutory regional marine plans around Scotland, of which three would cover the Highland local planning authority area. The responsibility lies with Scottish Ministers to agree to take forward any of the proposed three Highland Regional Marine Plans; whilst the Highland Council will be one of the key organisations involved, it is not within its remit to progress these.

The Resilience Team provides acute response plans and strategies for events that may or may not have a climate component. For example, flooding may be exacerbated by heavier winter rainfall (as predicted in the models presented in the Adapting to Climate Change in the Highlands report), but the emergency response is a generic document that is not concerned with the cause but rather the consequence of a particular emergency. Highland Council Resilience structures, along with those of partner agencies within the Highlands & Islands Local Resilience Partnership actively prepare for severe weather events, training key staff, and have activated these special arrangements to protect the public, property and the environment.
The Highlands & Islands Local Resilience Partnership (a partnership which sits within the NoSRRP, comprising Highland, Shetland, Orkney and Western Isles Council areas), a multi-agency exercise was held in each of the four respective areas – (a) Skye & Lochaber, (b) Inverness, (c) Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey, and (d) Caithness & Sutherland and Ross & Cromarty – focussing on the response to a severe weather incident (flooding).

Supported by the North of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership (NoSRRP). There are three RRPs in Scotland, based on the three Police Scotland hubs. RRPs bring the organisations involved in dealing with emergencies together to plan for, and respond to, all kinds of events, which are regularly tested in joint exercises and during real emergencies. Since their inception, RRPs have improved local cooperation between councils and emergency response partners and evolved in each area to consider local circumstances. Each of the three RRPs is tasked with producing a regional 'Community Risk Register' which directs organisational and collaborative emergency planning activities within their area. This risk assessment process is led by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and is conducted using a formal 'Risk and Preparedness Assessment' methodology. The latest version (April 2016) of the NoSRRP Community Risk Register is available here. It identifies 6 main risks pertinent to the North of Scotland RRP area, comprising Influenza Type Diseases – Pandemic, Severe Weather, Flooding, Interruption to Utilities, Transport Disruptions, and Pollution and Contamination. A revised NoSRRP Community Risk Register has been delayed (somewhat ironically) because of the current pandemic, but work is currently underway. RRP Community Risk Registers are informed by the Scottish Risk Assessment (SRA) (revised 2020), produced by the Scottish Government, which identifies the civil contingencies emergencies that Scotland may face in the next 5 years, including those which are climate related.

Good progress continues to be made in helping and encouraging communities to prepare local community resilience plans, which focus on steps communities can take to help themselves in the event of extreme weather events, as well as providing for vulnerable members of the community, or those who will become vulnerable in the event of prolonged power cuts or disruptions to water supply or essential transport links.

This has been achieved by the Resilience Team and Ward Managers working with Scottish & Southern Energy Power Distribution's (SSEPD) staff to increase the adoption of plans within communities. Approximately 50 communities have engaged in community resilience planning. Individual resilience, in the event of significant impacts arising from severe weather events, has been promoted through Corporate Communications. In the aftermath of pluvial flooding in Dingwall, warning and informing for flooding events has been updated and Scottish Flood Forum was invited to a number of drop-in events to provide practical prevention advice.

4c   What action has the organisation taken to adapt to climate change?

The Highland Council has a joint focus on climate change adaptation. The first is to work with local communities to raise awareness about a range of different issues from flood risk management to biodiversity that has a climate change component. The second is a focus on the Council's responsibility to ensure the provision of basic services and infrastructure in the face of particular risks or threats. Most engagement work is delivered through the Council's Environment Team, and principally, the Climate Change team. The Countryside Rangers, who now fall under the High Life Highland umbrella, work with wider community, schools, and initiatives to promote natural, built, and cultural heritage. Climate change is woven through the whole programme of activities and forms part of risk assessment for their facilities.
The Council's Access Team safeguards access and implements access related projects across the Highlands. They deal with climate change adaptation on a regular basis, for example, and where relevant, conducting risk assessments for particular sites in terms of the impact of sea level rises, or from increasing frequency of storm damage and flooding. Based on these risk assessments, the Access Team focuses on adapting routes and materials used to mitigate effects of climate change. The Forestry Team recently published a new Tree Strategy, which specifically references the potential impacts of climate change on management needs for the Council's tree resource. The main role of the Forestry Team is the protection of trees / woodlands through Tree Preservation Orders & Conservation Areas; encouraging the protection of trees on development sites through planning consultation and working with colleagues to maintain and enhance the Council's tree resource.

The Highland Council continues to work collaboratively with SEPA, the Met Office and other partner agencies to plan for and respond to weather related incidents. In Q3 of 2020, a series of exercises were held at a local level involving each of our five Emergency Liaison Groups (ELGs) to test the multi-agency response to weather-based scenarios. In September 2020, the annual River Ness flood gate maintenance exercise was held to test the operation of flood gates.

The Highland Council is also a partner in Flows to the Future, an initiative to restore peatland in Caithness, and broaden understanding of the importance of peatland ecology, as well as the carbon benefits provided by well-managed peatlands. Additionally, a number of strategies are being developed related to natural resource management, including a land use strategy, a revision of the peatland strategy, and a forest and woodland strategy that will all take climate change into account.

With regard to ensuring the provision of essential services and fulfilling the Council's role as a planning authority and emergency responder, there are a number of different services that are impacted directly and indirectly by climate change. For example, the potential impacts of climate change have a bearing on the Corporate Risk, Resilience, Flood Risk Management, and Planning teams as part of their risk assessment and project planning processes. This varies depending on particular circumstances but may include assessing flood risk based on UKCP18 climate scenarios while designing flood prevention schemes, or the potential impact of more frequent severe winter storms on power and water supplies, particularly to vulnerable rural communities.

In response to the Dynamic Coast 2 report, The Council has applied for Green Growth Accelerator funding through the pathfinder programme. This funding would be used to install nature-based solutions to high flood-risk areas on the east coast of Highland which would have multiple ecosystem services.

Landscapes as Carbon Sinks (LaCS) is a European-wide collaboration of partners, including The Highland Council, which aims to attract private investment to the Flow Country peatland of Caithness and Sutherland. Some of the money attracted will be used for peatland restoration, which has a positive impact on flood mitigation.

Green Impact is an online sustainability tool which encourages Council employees to consider whether their use of energy is appropriate. The tool suggests sustainable and low-energy approaches to keeping homes and offices cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

The Highland Council is committed to supporting our local Fire and Rescue Service with their engagement and partnership working on deliberate fires and wildfires. Highland is home to vast expanses of peatlands, which have experienced significant fires in recent years and are under increased risk due to hotter summers. The Council also supports this service in its response to flooding, by promoting safety warnings and enhancing community engagement. These efforts are underpinned by the Highland Local Fire and Rescue Plan and the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan, both produced by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

4d **Where applicable, what progress has the body made in delivering the policies and proposals referenced N1, N2, N3, B1, B2, B3, S1, S2 and S3 in the Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme(a) ("the Programme")?**

If the body is listed in the Programme as a body responsible for the delivery of one or more policies and proposals under the objectives N1, N2, N3, B1, B2, B3, S1, S2 and S3, provide details of the progress made by the body in delivering each policy or proposal in the report year.

(a) This refers to the programme for adaptation to climate change laid before the Scottish Parliament under section 53(2) of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (asp 12) which currently has effect. The most recent one is entitled "Climate Ready Scotland: Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme" dated May 2014.

Objective	Objective reference	Theme	Policy ref.	Delivery progress made	Comments
Understand the effects of climate change and their impacts on the natural environment.	N1	Natural Environment	N1-10	Flood Risk Management Plan (2016-2022) published on 22/06/16.	Draws together multiple datasets to support flood risk management in the Highlands.
				Highland-wide Surface Water Management Plan	Any flood studies undertaken, include climate change projections in the modelling to understand the current flood risk as well as future flood risk.
Support a healthy and diverse natural environment with capacity to adapt.	N2	Natural Environment	N2-2	Highland-wide Local Development Plan. Policies 28 (Sustainable Design), 51 (Trees and Development), 55 (Peat and Soils), 56 (Travel), 64 (Flood Risk), 67 (Renewable Energy Developments), 74 (Green Networks), 75 (Open Space).	Review of HwLDP commenced in response to Scottish Planning Policy 2014. Policy work has been rolled into preparation of Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (IRSS) for Highland, the Council's policy submissions to inform National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and development of some new policies through current review of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP), all these documents having a climate emergency focus.

			N2-18	Flood Risk Management Plan published in 2016; works with communities on local community resilience plans to address flooding	Interim update reports can be found [here]().
			N2-20	Highland Biodiversity Action Plan; Pilot Pentland Firth & Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan was published in March 2016	Highland Council will work with partner organisations to develop 3 Regional Marine Spatial Plans for the National Marine Areas identified adjacent to Highland
Sustain and enhance the benefits, goods and services that the natural environment provides.	N3	Natural Environment		Highland Nature: Biodiversity Action Plan, 2021-2026; Highland Nature Actions 2015 – 2020; Highland Adapts Highland-wide Local Development Plan	Highland Nature: Biodiversity Action Plan sets out non-statutory actions for Highland Nature. Partners, including landowners and regional organisations, can commit to these actions; Highland Adapts has three years funding to begin to roll out the priorities of the Highland Community Planning partners who recognise the need work closely with communities to : • Undertake a Highland-wide climate risk assessment which will highlight vulnerable species, habitats and landscapes and identify actions to protect the environment • Increase understanding and build the business case for nature-based adaptation actions, such as natural flood risk management.

					Main issues report of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan has gone out for consultation.
Understand the effects of climate change and their impacts on buildings and infrastructure networks.	B1	Buildings and infrastructure networks	B1-13	Flood Risk Management Plan (2016-2022) published on 22/06/16. Historic Environment Scotland Climate Change Adaptation for Traditional Buildings published in October 2016.	
Provide the knowledge, skills and tools to manage climate change impacts on buildings and infrastructure.	B2	Buildings and infrastructure networks			*Highland Adapts* will develop a strategy and action plan which will highlight critical areas for action across partner agencies.
Increase the resilience of buildings and infrastructure networks to sustain and enhance the benefits and services provided.	B3	Buildings and infrastructure networks	B3-3	Highland-wide Local Development Plan (adopted 2012)	Policy framework is being updated through review of the HwLDP, recent preparation of Highland IRSS, inputting to NPF4 and review of the IMFLDP.
			B3-7	The Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme is reported quarterly to strategic and area committee and details investment in Council housing.	The Scottish Government's Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH) supersedes the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS), with more stringent standards to be achieved. Council housing stock has been being assessed and is 75% compliant with EESSH.

			The Council invested over £2.3m in 2020/21 towards improving the energy efficiency of its housing stock and is planning to spend an additional £12m in 2021-22.
B3-8	The Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme is reported quarterly to strategic and area committee and details investment in Council housing (including ongoing compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard)		All social housing meets the tolerable standard outlined.
B3-6	The Council's Climate Change & Energy Team oversees the delivery of the EES:ABS programme, in collaboration with E.ON		The EES:ABS programme is designed to assist owner occupiers and privately rented properties to improve energy efficiency through a variety of measures. The scheme is designed to support the reduction in fuel poverty by reducing energy costs and carbon emissions arising from energy use within the household.

The Council scheme allows householders to access insulation measures and first-time central heating which can be delivered in an area-based format. |

					All areas of the Highlands are targeted over the course of the scheme.
Understand the effects of climate change and their impacts on people, homes and communities.	S1	Society		The Highland Climate Challenge online game for Primary Schools provided early education of carbon reducing behaviours and activities and helped to recognise their carbon footprint.	*Highland Adapts* will have a heavy focus on community engagement to help develop a strong evidence base for locally appropriate solutions to climate change across the region.
Increase the awareness of the impacts of climate change to enable people to adapt to future extreme weather events.	S2	Society	S2-5	The Resilience Team and Flood Risk Management Team are both working with communities and partner organisations to develop local community resilience plans. Energy Sparks uses smart meter data, to show pupils, staff and volunteers how much energy the school is using each day. The unique online tool presents bespoke analysis of the energy data with suggestions of actions the school community could take to save energy and reduce the school's carbon emissions	

Green Impact is a bespoke online toolkit designed to support environmentally and socially sustainable practice. Teams within the school, work on the toolkit to complete actions to win a bronze, silver or gold award.

Support our health services and emergency responders to enable them to respond effectively to the increased pressures associated with a changing climate.	S3	Society	S3-6	The Resilience Team in collaboration with emergency responders has put in place a comprehensive evaluation strategy to assess performance after each training exercise/ event.	These evaluations are not specifically about climate related risk, but are about responding more effectively whatever the scenario, which may include a variety of situations that could be impacted by climate change. Many of the actions related to public health, climate change and community resilience are either already in place or being developed by the CPP.

4e   What arrangements does the body have in place to review current and future climate risks?

The Highland Council uses the UKCP18 climate change scenarios to inform future planning decisions and incorporates any changes in these scenarios into the relevant decision-making processes. Examples of this are illustrated in section 4c and 4g. The Resilience Team is responsible for updating the Council's emergency plans and contributing to resilience partnership planning for risks that may be impacted by climate change. The Resilience Team also assists community groups with the development of Community Resilience Plans, with support from partners to allow communities to assess their own unique risks and prepare contingency plans for responding to the consequences of these risks. This includes risks from severe weather and other risks which will be exacerbated by future climate change, although the plans are more generic and do not specifically reference future climate risks.

4f   What arrangements does the body have in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of the adaptation actions?

There are different strategies for monitoring and evaluation depending on the specific nature of the threat or sector being addressed. This can be in the form of implementing policies or strategies in response to national legislation, that contain specific indicators as required. As much of the future climate change adaptation considerations are done through risk assessment processes, the monitoring and evaluation processes are included as part of individual project requirements.

Highland Adapts will develop a high-level dataset which will provide baseline data which can be used to monitor and evaluate different adaptation actions.

4g   What are the body's top 5 priorities for the year ahead in relation to climate change adaptation?

Priority 1: Continue to progress the Highland Adapts initiative and recruit Project Management team. Climate change has now been incorporated into the Council's corporate risk register. Following discussions and workshops with Community Planning Partners, the place-based, partnership, region-wide approach to adaptation called Highland Adapts is required to meaningfully address the risks of a changing climate and protect service delivery. The Council has committed funding of £15k per year for 3 years to help establish Highland Adapts and additional funding has also been committed by partners. The Principal Project Manager job role has been advertised and interviews will take place in March 2021.

Priority 2: Through the NPF4 consultation and development of an indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS) for Highland, highlight and demonstrate the need for strong adaptation and resilience principles to be embedded in national and local planning policy.

Priority 3: Continue work with emergency response partners to develop community resilience plans alongside local communities to help assess what communities can do to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of severe weather events, particularly for vulnerable individuals (or those who will become vulnerable in the event of prolonged power cuts or disruptions to water supply).

Priority 4: Identify and secure resource for a dedicated adaptation lead within the Highland Council, to develop refreshed corporate adaptation strategy and action plan.

Priority 5: Develop a strategy for adapting our buildings with the relevant services to ensure they are suitable for weather extremes (heatwaves, cold winters and flooding).
Much work around climate change adaptation focuses on working with communities on community resilience projects across Highland in a number of areas including flooding, biodiversity, and emergency planning. Each sector involved in climate-related risk assessment has their own priorities within these broad areas.

4h   Supporting information and best practice Provide any other relevant supporting information and any examples of best practice by the organisation in relation to adaptation.

The Highland Environment Forum has focused on developing and conducting public consultation of the Biodiversity Action Plan for 2021-2026. The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) specifically references the importance of climate change as a factor to drive environmental change in Highland. For example, working with the Invasive Species Forum to deal with the threat of new species moving north due to climate change.

Through the work of the Biodiversity Working Group, the results of the 2015 – 20 action plan has been summarised and the 2021 - 2026 plan completed. Consultation with partners and forum members has already been undertaken and will continue as the plan is developed. As part of the process of creating the 2021 - 2026 action plan the Highland Environment Forum has strengthened the biodiversity group membership, creating a stronger partnership for delivery of the plan.

The Highland-wide Local Development Plan will help Highland to meet the targets of NPF4 by ensuring that development has a positive impact on biodiversity. This impact is currently limited to the region described in the Inner Murray First Development Plan.

The Highland Council's capacity to have a positive impact on biodiversity has been strengthened through the addition of employment positions and through new funding sources being secured. A third ecologist has been employed to help deliver on statutory requirements for biodiversity in planning. A joint-funded post with NatureScot for a Biodiversity Partnership Officer will begin soon, with the task of helping both organisations deliver on the ecological emergency.

Funding opportunities include: the Nature Renewal Fund, UK Community Renewal Fund and Loch Ness 360.

The Council's Historic Environment Team is currently implementing new management techniques to be used where peatland restoration is being undertaken to ensure that important historic environments and archaeology is preserved or maintained during peatland restoration projects.

5 Procurement

5a How have procurement policies contributed to compliance with climate change duties?

The Council's Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy guides sustainable procurement activity at a strategic and operational level, contributing positively and progressively to duties and commitments under Scottish Climate commitments. The policy is sufficiently agile to contribute to broader climate positive aspirations which support global energy transition, application of meaningful circular economy measures and a net zero future. Strategic and practical guidance is provided at key stages: identification of need, specification development, selection/award and contract management. Policy/guidance assists procurers to proactively address key aspects of the duties: mitigation (ensuring reduction in greenhouse gases/enhancing carbon storage), adaptation (e.g., flood prevention) and maximising added social, economic and environmental value in our procurements and national frameworks call offs.

The Commercial and Procurement Shared Service (C&PSS)
C&PSS delivers the procurement function in The Highland Council. The 2017-2022 Joint Procurement Strategy is fully aligned to: i) Scottish Model of Procurement (balance of quality, cost and sustainability) ii) National Performance Framework iii) Public Service Reform Agenda and iv) Scottish Government aspirations to "support Scotland's economic growth by delivering social and environmental benefits, supporting innovation and promoting public procurement processes and systems which are transparent, streamlined, standard, proportionate, fair and business-friendly."

The Council's Procurement Mission Statement commits to delivery of "ethical and sustainable value for money solutions that support the operational needs and wider strategic aims of the councils and the communities they service to further local and national priorities to the fullest extent possible." This converges with the National Performance Framework outcome "valuing, enjoying, protecting and enhancing our environment" and wider vision for the environment. Policy/strategy/guidance emphasises a commitment (beyond mandatory thresholds) to identify: "leverage opportunities (including social, economic and environmental value) aligned to the needs and priorities of our communities".

Policy

The partner councils aim to act as a role model within the public sector by carrying out activities in a responsible and sustainable manner, considering how the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area can be improved by working with all sectors of the business community to achieve increased prosperity.

As responsible and ethical buyers, the partner councils aim to embed the key principles of sustainability into procurement activity for the benefit of society, the economy and the environment. The policy statement appears prominently in sourcing strategies and tender documents guiding procurers and bidders. Communication in this manner leads to climate positive measures receiving early, considered focus resulting in higher quality, more innovative bids aligned to local priorities and climate change duties.

Policy/guidance explains not all sustainability measures are solely achieved through community benefits. Outcomes can be specified as contractual conditions e.g., particular eco standards (or equivalent), product composition and opportunities to introduce circular economy measures. Methods of production, lifecycle costing, environmental performance, reduction of packaging (particularly single use plastic) wastewater standards/accreditation and production methods at any stage of the lifecycle of supply or service promoted.

Example Climate Clause

Zero Waste Scotland Specification Development (Category and Commodity) guidance is promoted. Sustainable procurement measures achieved in the specification regarded as "community benefits" and procurers are encouraged to consider utilising community benefits and the specification to maximise environmental wellbeing.

Sustainability tools are promoted in policy and guidance: i) Sustainability Test, ii) Prioritisation Tool and iii) Lifecycle Impact Mapping. As with procurement strategy, linkages to The Scottish Model of Procurement; The National Performance Framework and Local Outcome Improvement Plans.

Policy/guidance recognises that councils have influence and responsibilities beyond the geographic areas they serve. Sustainable procurement measures/community benefits can be captured at the following levels: Local (Council/area specific); National (Scotland/UK) or Global (e.g., fairly traded/ethically sourced goods/carbon emission reduction.) Guidance prompts that many national strategic objectives are addressable locally (employment & skills, Real Living Wage, health and wellbeing, poverty, biodiversity, reduced road miles/reduced carbon emissions etc.)

To simplify, sustainable procurement is strongly recognised as a means of increasing prosperity. Prosperity of the (local) economy; Prosperity of (local) people; Prosperity of (local) places and Prosperity of the (local) environment.

5b   How has procurement activity contributed to compliance with climate change duties?

The following represent illustrative samples of procurement activity i) delivering a reduction in CO_2 ii) improving energy efficiency and iii) incorporating meaningful sustainability criteria:

1.   Construction – follows industry terms/best practice (NEC3, SBCC ICE etc), Building Standards/Building Performance polices. Specifications incorporate sustainability, energy and environmental considerations to a challenging but proportionate extent per project. Strong ethos that value for money demonstrated by whole of life costing/best price-quality ratio. Current and future climate risks factored into procurement processes where relevant to safeguarding assets/infrastructure and communities. In the reporting period, procurer and supplier knowledge/awareness of circular economy principles and opportunities increased.

2.   Sensor Network– Illustrative of the Council's proactive approach to adaptation. At full business case stage in 2019/2020. Progressing and will assess the merits of strategically deploying sensors that could serve to support early intervention in the context of flood prevention.

National Frameworks

Through participation in User Intelligence Groups (UIGs), the Council works in close collaboration with Scotland Excel (SXL) to improve sustainability credentials in the development of new national frameworks. A comprehensive sustainability test is carried out by SXL for each new framework. Amongst other considerations, the bidder's policies on managing waste, minimising carbon footprint, fair work practices, innovation and commitments to delivering meaningful community benefits are routinely explored and subject to robust contract/supplier management.

The Council makes extensive use of national frameworks (particularly SXL) The SXL Contracts Register lists each operative SXL framework. In most cases the SXL Contracts Register contains a summary of sustainability considerations. These considerations represent a minimum standard which can (where options allow) be enhanced through purchasing decisions made in "call offs" from the framework. For example, lease and purchase of fleet vehicles and plant predominantly through SXL frameworks. In any framework involving delivery of supplies, new generations of frameworks encourage increasingly superior emissions class of vehicles from framework commencement or willingness to work towards a particular framework during the life of the framework. Food related frameworks increasingly incorporate reduced packaging/waste and circular economy principles.

Scottish Government Frameworks and Contracts cover a wide range of goods and services and can be used by central government and the wider public sector. In some cases, the list of frameworks and contracts contain a summary of sustainability considerations. These considerations represent a minimum standard which can (where options allow) be enhanced through purchasing decisions made in "call offs" from the framework.

Utilities
- Electricity - Promoting greener power: option of Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO) certificates at a fixed rate; range of Energy Efficiency Services available as additional services and opportunities to sell energy back to the grid.
- Natural Gas – sustainable measures and energy performance guarantee option to ensure a range of energy conservation measures.
- Water – Climate Change Emergency measures including intelligent water management programme for reducing water usage with associated reduction in CO_2 emissions

5c Supporting information and best practice

In the reporting period, the Commercial and Procurement Shared Service (CPSS) assessed a variety of options for Climate Friendly Criteria/Weightings (including comprehensive appraisal of carbon calculator tools) and assessment of how impacts could be monitored and reported upon. Representatives from the CPSS team are involved with three themed corporate Climate Sub-Groups feeding into the Climate Change Plan supporting enabling actions to support integration of climate change into systems/processes and to build internal awareness of climate change/circular economy principles.

Despite the impact of the coronavirus (Covid19), significant community benefit outcomes have been secured in the reporting period. Guided by the Council's Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy, 311 community benefit outcomes included in regulated contracts, are in process or were delivered in the reporting period. This represents a community benefits inclusion rate of 73% and an inclusion rate of 80% in respect of fair work criteria.

The Policy guides sustainable procurement activity at a strategic and operational level and contributes positively and progressively to duties and commitments under Scottish Climate Change Commitments. The policy is sufficiently agile to contribute to broader climate positive aspirations which support global energy transition, application of meaningful circular economy measures and a net zero future.

Strategic and practical guidance is provided at key stages: identification of need, specification development, selection/award and contract management.

Policy/guidance assists procurers to proactively address key aspects of the duties: mitigation (ensuring reduction in greenhouse gases/enhancing carbon storage), adaptation (e.g., Flood prevention) and maximising added social, economic and environmental value in our procurements and national frameworks call offs.

An increasingly significant number of outcomes relate to "environmental wellbeing" and promote the Council's leadership role in net zero transition. The approach provides a framework to work consistently within.

In the reporting period, a new section within the Community Benefits Project Plan/Award Questionnaire section of the template Invitation to Tender Documents introduced a climate friendly weighting. Example Climate Clause
Bidders are asked to outline commitment on areas directly related to performing the contract, which may include energy efficiency in buildings, emissions class of fleet vehicles, effective route planning measures, energy/fuel efficiency measures in buildings/vehicles/operations, minimisation of waste, circular economy initiatives, reuse of materials, carbon neutrality initiatives, reduction of material/ packaging/reduced plastic content of packaging, avoidance of single use plastics etc. Performance against these commitments will be monitored during ongoing contract management.

Future Plans

CPSS has reviewed the forward pipeline of procurements for financial year 2021-2022 and identified those which will include climate friendly criteria. The projects have been selected across a wide range of categories including Construction, Social Care, PPE and Agency workers based upon assessment of most impact in terms of outcomes. Projects will be reviewed on a continuous basis and additional projects added where it is proportionate and relevant to do so.

A further review of potential options for a system will be conducted with a view to implementing a system to monitor, measure and report on Community Benefits, Fair Work Practices, Sustainability and Climate outcomes achieved through procurement activity.

6   Validation and Declaration
6a   Internal validation process

Corporate emissions data is compiled by a variety of teams across the Council. This data is validated by each service prior to being provided to the Climate Change team. The Climate Change team then provides an additional 'sense check', scrutinising the data for consistency with previous year's reporting. Requirements for the data are carefully discussed with each team, and a written process tailored to each specific team has been developed to ensure consistency in the type and scope of data provided each year, along with an agreed person responsible for delivering the data to the Climate Change team. Data is stored securely with both the service providing the data, and with the Climate Change team. Data on staff travel is subject to internal scrutiny through the Communities and Place Service.

6b   Peer validation process
Although no external peer validation is currently undertaken in respect of our annual Public Bodies Climate Change Duties return, we would welcome additional external scrutiny and suggestions regarding performance and opportunities for improvement.

6c   External validation process
Individual services that supply data to the Climate Change team have additional audit and scrutiny requirements for their data. For example, the majority of the

energy use data provided is scrutinised under the CRC process, while waste data is reported to SEPA. The Council held the Carbon Trust Standard until April 2015, and follows the processes put in place during this process.

6d   **No Validation Process** Indicate this in the space provided and the reasons why this has not been undertaken.

NA

6e   Declaration

I confirm that the information in this report is accurate and provides a fair representation of the organisation's performance in relation to climate change.

Name: Keith Masson
Role in the organisation: Climate Change & Energy Team Manager
Date: 05/11/2021

End of Required Section