

**CONSULTATION ON THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SECTOR BODIES IN TACKLING  
CLIMATE CHANGE**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Climate Change and Environmental Action Short Life Working Group (thereafter referred to as SLWG) of current Scottish Government Consultation titled 'The role of public sector bodies in tackling climate change'.
- 1.2 The closing date for submissions for this consultation is 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The Council's Climate Change Board will be discussing and finalising the consultation response at the next planned meeting of the Board on 11<sup>th</sup> November.
- 1.3 Any Members of the SLWG who wish to contribute or submit feedback to this consultation via the Climate Change Board are encouraged to do so.

**Recommendation**

That the SLWG:-

- 1.3.1 Note and consider this live Scottish Government consultation;
- 1.3.2 Agree that the Climate Change Board will submit a response on behalf of the Council before the 4<sup>th</sup> December deadline;
- 1.3.3 Are encouraged to feedback any comments relating to the consultation to the Climate Change Board before their meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> November so they can be considered; and
- 1.3.4 That the finalised consultation response will be presented to the SLWG at future meeting.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Climate Change and Environmental Action Short Life Working Group (thereafter referred to as SLWG) of current Scottish Government Consultation titled 'The role of public sector bodies in tackling climate change'.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

That the SLWG:-

3.1.1 Note and consider this live Scottish Government consultation;

3.1.2 Agree that the Climate Change Board will submit a response on behalf of the Council before the 4th December deadline;

3.1.3 Are encouraged to feedback any comments relating to the consultation to the Climate Change Board before their meeting on 11th November so they can be considered; and

3.1.4 That the finalised consultation response will be presented to the SLWG at future meeting.

**4.0 DETAIL**

4.1 In 2009, The Climate Change (Scotland) Act was passed which set a target to reduce Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 from a 1990 baseline. The target was based on evidence that global greenhouse gas emissions reductions of between 50% and 85% by 2050 would be required to minimise the chances of a global temperature rise in excess of 2°C.

4.2 In December 2015, the United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Paris. At the conference, a global agreement was made to limit the global temperature rise to 2°C by the end of the century and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C. This was termed the UN Paris Agreement and came into force on 4 November 2016.

4.3 In May 2019, the UK Committee on Climate Change published its report entitled 'Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming'. The report was a response to a request from the Governments of the UK, Wales and Scotland to reassess the UK's long-term emissions targets. One of the report's recommendations was that Scotland achieves net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. The Scottish Government has agreed with this recommendation and, along with a number of other Public Sector Bodies, has declared a 'climate emergency'. On 26 September 2019, the Scottish Parliament passed the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Bill accepting the new 2045 net zero target.

4.4 The Scottish Government considers the public sector to have a key role to play in tackling climate change. The Scottish Government is, therefore, consulting on the role that Public Sector Bodies can play in tackling climate change. Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, entitled 'Public Bodies Duties' places a duty on Public Sector Bodies to take action with respect to climate change mitigation and adaptation. In 2015, the Scottish Government implemented the part of the Act that requires Public Sector Bodies to report annually on their emissions and action taken to tackle climate change.

4.5 The consultation document can be viewed on the Scottish Government web site as follows:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/role-public-sector-bodies-tackling-climate-change-consultation/>

4.6 The Consultation makes two significant proposals to drive action.

4.7 Firstly, the Scottish Government is proposing a change to the public sector reporting duty on climate change action, which all Councils, along with a wide range of other public sector bodies, are required to undertake. The consultation proposes that all public sector bodies:

- set a date by which they will reach zero emissions;
- report on how spending plans align with emissions reduction targets;
- make their annual reports publicly accessible.

4.8 Secondly, the consultation proposes the establishment of two newly created structures for climate change action at the national level:

- a) 'National Forum on Climate Change' would bring together government, the public sector, private sector, academia, NGOs and the wider public, with the intended purpose to open up climate action to deliberative democracy and public participation;
- b) a 'High Ambition Climate Network' for the public sector would meet twice a year, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change

and Land Reform, and supported by a Senior Officials Group from across the bodies involved. It would be focussed on making strategic connections at the highest levels across the most ambitious public bodies.

4.9 The key consultation questions are considered to be:-

Q1. What additional training, information or guidance do you think Public Sector Bodies need to help them increase their action on climate change?

Q2. What are your views on the proposed structure for the High Ambition Climate Network of Chief Executives and Elected Members?

Q3. Do you agree that Public Sector Bodies should be required to set targets for when they will achieve zero direct emissions, and for reduced indirect emissions?

Yes / no / don't know Please explain your answer.

Q4. Do you agree that Public Sector Bodies should report annually on how they use their resources to contribute to reducing emissions?

Yes / no / don't know Please explain your answer.

Q5. Do you agree that the details of what Public Sector Bodies are required to report on should be set out in statutory guidance instead of on the face of secondary legislation (otherwise known as an Order)?

Yes / no / don't know Please explain your answer.

Q6. Do you agree to the proposed changes to the list of Public Sector Bodies that are required to annually report their emissions?

Yes / no / don't know If you answered no, please specify which aspect of the proposal you disagree with and why.

Q7. Do you agree with our proposals for amending the reporting requirements as set out above?

Yes / no / don't know If you answered no, please specify which aspect of the proposal you disagree with.

Q8. Is there anything else you think should be added to the reporting duties, or anything else you think should be removed?

Q9. Do you agree that Public Sector Bodies should each make their own report on emissions reductions publicly available?

Yes / no / don't know Please explain your answer.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy: None at present as consultation

6.2 Financial: None at present as consultation

6.3 Legal: None at present as consultation

6.4 HR:	None at present as consultation
6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:	None at present as consultation
6.6 Equalities – protected Characteristics:	None at present as consultation
6.7 Socio-economic Duty:	None at present as consultation
6.8 Islands:	None at present as consultation
6.9 Risk:	None at present as consultation
6.10 Customer Service:	None at present as consultation

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services  
29<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**For further information contact:**  
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