

PLAN AND FOCUS OF ACTIVITY

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

- 1.1 As outlined in the previous agenda item titled 'Governance Arrangements' the Climate Change and Environmental Action Group (hereafter referred to SLWG) is required to '*develop and determine at its first meeting, a plan which identifies the focus for its activity, and the council services from which it will draw support with an initial update report to the Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting in December 2019.*'
- 1.2 Climate change and environmental topics can be wide ranging and varied. It is therefore important to harness resource of the SLWG and supporting Officers in an efficient and directed manner by focusing activity towards issues that are deemed to be most pertinent or relevant to our Council area. It is also necessary to consider what and in what ways the SLWG can best influence and what engagement is required with our communities and other stakeholders relating to Climate Change.
- 1.3 This report aims to stimulate discussion and suggests a plan of activity for the SLWG from November 2019 to August 2020. It is a requirement from the Council to submit a plan of activity to the December 2019 Policy & Resources Committee.

Recommendation

That the SLWG:-

1. Note and consider this paper;
2. Discuss climate change and environmental matters; and
3. Agree a plan of activity for the SLWG;

PLAN AND FOCUS OF ACTIVITY

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report aims to stimulate discussion and suggests a plan of activity for the SLWG from November 2019 to August 2020. It is a requirement from the Council to submit a plan of activity to the December 2019 Policy & Resources Committee.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the SLWG:-

1. Note and consider this paper;
2. Discuss climate change and environmental matters; and
3. Agree a plan of activity for the SLWG.

4.0 DETAIL**Global / EU Context**

- 4.1 Across the globe there is an increasing focus on the urgent need to address the social, economic and environmental impacts of climate change. A new wave of awareness raising – particularly from youth and high impact protest groups - is notable across many countries. The physical effects of climate change are also apparent with more extreme weather events, flooding and rises in the sea level. At a European level the new EU Commission will legislate for carbon neutrality by 2050 and will present a new cross-cutting European Green Deal to guide implementation. Scotland's 2020, 2030 and 2050 emission targets are in line with the EU. The recent Programme for Government announced a Continuity Bill to keep Scottish legislation in line with evolving EU law including on climate targets even post EU Exit.

National Context

- 4.2 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 is the primary legislative document in Scotland and has been subject to several updates and amendments in the past decade. It created the statutory framework for greenhouse gas emissions reductions in Scotland by setting an interim 42 per cent reduction target for 2020.
- 4.3 The recently published Scottish Government's Programme¹ for Government has a substantial focus on climate change. It proposes a range of interventions across policy areas.
- 4.4 The Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Target) (Scotland) Bill² passed Stage 3 in the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 25 September. It focusses predominantly on the numerical greenhouse gas reduction target. A number of amendments were made to the bill, most importantly an amendment to ensure early action, by increasing the interim target of 70% reduction in greenhouse gases to 75% by 2030 (compared to 1990 levels) and net-zero emissions by 2045.
- 4.5 The Climate Change Bill also puts into law the requirements for the transition to a net-zero economy to be “just”. Last year the Scottish Government established a Just Transition Commission to advise on how to achieve a net-zero economy in a way that is fair for all by following the internationally recognised principles that requires all stakeholders to:
- Plan, invest and implement a transition to environmentally and socially sustainable jobs, sectors and economies, building on Scotland’s economic and workforce strengths and potential;
 - Create opportunities to develop resource efficient and sustainable economic approaches, which help address inequality and poverty;
 - Design and deliver low carbon investment and infrastructure, and make all possible efforts to create decent, fair and high value work, in a way which does not negatively affect the current workforce and overall economy.
- 4.6 Scotland's Climate Change Plan³ sets out a comprehensive view of how all aspects of society across industry, transport, energy, buildings, heating and land use will need to change if we are to reach our vision for growing the economy, improving the wellbeing of the people of Scotland and protecting and enhancing our natural environment. The Scottish Government has committed to updating the Plan in light of the new

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/protecting-scotlands-future-governments-programme-scotland-2019-20/>

² [www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Climate%20Change%20\(Emissions%20Reduction%20Targets\)%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill30BS052019.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Climate%20Change%20(Emissions%20Reduction%20Targets)%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill30BS052019.pdf)

³ www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-governments-climate-change-plan-third-report-proposals-policies-2018-9781788516488

targets within six months of the Climate Change Bill receiving Royal Assent.

- 4.7 COSLA are also supportive of the ambitious approach to tackling climate change in Scotland and the Scottish Government's 'net zero' emissions target for 2045. COSLA via their Environment and Economy Board have been working in partnership with the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) and recently published a report and suggested 'next steps' towards delivering the targets within the context of local government.
- 4.8 They are proposing a dialogue with Councils' and Government around scoping of potential action relating to the following headings:-
- Leadership – in all spheres and at all levels;
 - Education – within organisations and the wider public;
 - A 'concrete' local delivery plan – linked to the national Climate Change Plan;
 - Clear duties and responsibilities;
 - A uniform methodological approach (consistent data and performance measures, to facilitate action that is more accurately measurable and deliverable); and
 - Capacity and resources

The full COSLA paper is contained at Appendix A.

- 4.9 Another key principle of addressing climate change in Scotland is the concept of 'adaptation'. Adaptation is 'the adjustment in economic, social or natural systems in response to actual or expected climate change, to limit harmful consequences and exploit beneficial opportunities' (*Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme, The Scottish Government, 2014*).
- 4.10 Adaptation Scotland was set up by the Scottish Government and provides a range of material and guidance to support local authorities and organisations at different stages of developing climate change adaptation strategies and action plans. Their most recent publication 'Scotland Adapts: A capability framework for a climate ready public sector'⁴ is contained at **Appendix B**. The document is relatively easy to read and provides a practical toolkit and case study which may aid discussions of the SLWG.

Argyll and Bute Context

- 4.11 Officers of Argyll and Bute Council have been considering and addressing aspects of Climate Change on a number of fronts for well over a decade. Differing teams address different aspects and can include planning policy, energy efficiency, property design, economic

⁴www.adaptationscotland.org/application/files/5515/5808/7098/Adaptation_Scotland_PSG_Handbook_FINAL.pdf

policy, fleet, waste, education, roads, marine, marine design, procurement and corporate policy to name a few. There is no argument that addressing climate change is a corporate and cross cutting vocation that requires universal buy-in. This is in addition to the partnership working that is also required with our businesses and communities.

4.12 The Council was one of a few public sector organisations to pilot Carbon Management Plans in 2008 in partnership with the Carbon Trust (ie before the Climate Change (Scotland) Act). At that time it was identified that the main sources of Council CO2 production were from:-

- (1) Handling & collection of household & business waste – 42%
- (2) Buildings Electricity – 23 %
- (3) Buildings Oil – 11%
- (4) Fleet / Business Travel – 11%
- (5) Other sources – 13%.

4.13 This process also put in place a variety of onsite renewable energy schemes, installing energy efficient technologies and controls to minimize wasted energy.

4.14 The Council has also operated a Climate Change Board since April 2017 to oversee Climate Change activities and this reports to the Strategic Management Team. The Board has been chaired since July 2019 by the Head of Commercial Services and is made up of representatives drawn from all Council services and the Health and Social Care Partnership who have an interest in climate change. The Council also reports annually on climate change to the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) and publishes performance, statistics and information on both the Network's and Council websites. Links can be found here:-

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sustainable-development-and-climate-change>

<https://sustainablescotlandnetwork.org/reports/argyll-and-bute-council>

4.15 The Climate Change Board broadly works to an action plan and main duties include the preparation and submission of information to SSN. The Board has also heard from component departments who have delivered on significant climate change projects like:-

- Solar panels which generate up to 1MW of energy on Council owned buildings;
- Installation of 12 biomass boilers and schools & offices;
- Operation of a 50 kilowatt wind turbine which helps to power our Glengorm Waste Disposal Site on Mull;
- The change to LED lightbulbs in our street lighting is expected to save more than 1,100 tonnes of carbon dioxide every year;

- 99 schools and nurseries across Argyll and Bute (both Council and other providers) are registered with eco-schools and 47 have green flag status;
 - Our Sustainable Procurement Policy ensures that our procurement minimises its contribution to climate change.
- 4.16 Our Council region (not just activities of the Council) has also been recognised recently as having the lowest net carbon footprint of any local authority area in the UK⁵. This is largely due to our low population, de-carbonised electricity sources (windfarms / hydro), low numbers of heavy industry and large areas of forest and peat bogs which acts as an offset via carbon capture.
- 4.17 Our region, including all of the Highlands and Islands, have some distinct and existing challenges and opportunities for our Climate Change journey. On the one hand decarbonising transport between islands and in remote areas, decarbonising off-grid heating systems without exacerbating fuel poverty, decarbonising activity in the industrial installations across the Highlands and Islands without negatively impacting on employment and productivity, and restoring peatlands to the point where they stop being a major source of emissions are all major challenges not to be underestimated.
- 4.18 On the other hand, we are ideally placed to capitalise on the country's requirement for bio-energy and carbon sequestration with nature-based solutions such as peatland restoration and woodland creation alongside carbon capture and storage all acting as negative emissions solutions. Challenges and opportunities for our region are helpfully mapped by Scottish Natural Heritage as part of their paper for Convention of the Highlands and Island (28th October 2019). The main table is replicated at **Appendix C**.
- 4.19 The Council already have a suite of policies that relate to Climate Change for example:-

CLIMATE CHANGE OBJECTIVES	SOURCE
Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan Key Objective 1 "To address the impacts of climate change on everything we do and reduce our carbon footprint"	The Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan
"Ensuring a sustainable future by protecting the natural environment and mitigating climate change"	The Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan 2013 - 2023

⁵ <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17888516.green-council-area-reveal-reality-scotland-39-s-carbon-footprint-results-might-surprise/>

"The infrastructure that supports sustainable growth"	The Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan2013 - 2023
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4.20 The Council is also supportive and indeed champions the development of renewable energy, reducing carbon and environmental innovation in our region through the Renewable Energy Action Plan, our Economic Strategy, Rural Growth Deal and other action plans.

Short Life Working Group Plan

- 4.21 Literature, commentary and intervention for addressing Climate Change is extensive. Education, awareness raising and leadership are key aspects of addressing Climate Change and the very setting up of the SLWG is already seen as a positive aspect of that as it has been reported widely in media. The topic is wide ranging and other Councils have specific and dedicated Officer's / Teams delivering on Climate Change matters. Officers that contribute to our Climate Change Board do so as part of their own operational portfolio.
- 4.22 Over the course of the next 5 meetings of the SLWG (until August 2020) it is essential to focus resource and set ambitious yet achievable goals or targets to deliver maximum impact. For the purposes of the SLWG, it is proposed to exclude waste disposal from the scope of the group – even though it produces the largest carbon output of all Council activity - as there is separate extensive transformation underway via the Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) projects. It is also proposed that we streamline matters and it is suggested that activities are split into 3 broad categories:-

<p>Council Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council have direct influence; • Can be internal policy (like procurement) or external policy (like land use planning); • Keep abreast of changing national and international policy; • Can affect how community acts; • Awareness and leadership essential; • Transport policy; • Economic / Business Strategies; • Education; 	<p>Council Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council have direct influence; • Mainly our operational Activities; • Adaptation – eg flood defenses, resilience; • Reduction of energy; • Energy efficiency; • Generating energy; • Offsetting carbon; • Travel; • Education of staff/ Councillors; • Projects / investment. 	<p>Council as Climate Change Champion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness; • Education; • Promotion and reward; • Collaboration; • Partnership with Community Planning Partners; • Engagement – communities, business & youth importantly; • Take the lead.
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4.23 In this context we are suggesting the following Activity Plan is discussed and version agreed:-

PROPOSED SLWG ACTIVITY PLAN

ACTION	RESOURCE	TIMEFRAME
Council Policy		
1. Review existing Council policy and corporate policy approach to address climate change matters;	Economic Development, Procurement, Roads & Infrastructure, Property Services	January 2020
2. Consider the implications/opportunities of Government policy and legislation in relation to addressing Climate Change; a. Respond to SG Consultation	Climate Change Board	Ongoing Feedback from SG Consultation = January 2020
3. Review the Council's annual climate change submission to Scottish Government and other performance indicators in compliance with the Climate Change Act;	Climate Change Board	January 2020
Council Business		
4. Review the Action Plan and activities of the Climate Change Board;	Climate Change Board	March 2020
5. Consider the establishment of a climate change fund for innovation or development.	Climate Change Board	June 2020
6. Endorse a new renewable energy sourcing strategy for Council assets (RSS2).	Property Services	August 2020
Climate Change Champion		
7. Promote and champion the mitigation and adaption to the negative impacts of climate change, green investment in our region, sustainable development and resource efficiency for the Council & the communities we serve.	SLWG	Ongoing
8. Encourage effective partnership working across all community planning partners in relation to the impacts of climate change;	SLWG and Community Planning	Item on agenda for discussion at December 2020 CPP management committee meeting then ongoing

ACTION	RESOURCE	TIMEFRAME
9. Promote Argyll and Bute as a low carbon area and to develop and seek additional investment for green infrastructure including renewables, environmental and biodiversity business to develop;	Climate Change Board / Economic Development	May 2020
10. Identify, acknowledge and champion positive climate change projects carried out by (A) the Council (B) our CPP partners, (C) our communities (D) our businesses and others	Climate Change Board	June 2020
11. Development of a communications and engagement strategy around the impacts of climate change and how we intend to mitigate and adapt	Communications Team	March - August 2020
12. Recommended actions from the group are to be reported back to Full Council by August 2020	SLWG	August 2020

4.24 Members are asked to discuss and consider this draft plan in order to finalise an activity plan to consider at Policy & Resources Committee in December 2019.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy:	Consideration given to how the SLWG wish to review and shape Climate Change Policy
5.2 Financial:	Consideration given to how SLWG wish to resource climate change adaptation, policy and efficiencies
5.3 Legal:	None at present
5.4 HR:	None at present
5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:	None at present
5.6 Equalities – protected Characteristics:	None at present
5.7 Socio-economic Duty:	None at present as consultation
5.8 Islands	Certain climate change activities identified specifically for Island context
5.6 Risk:	Requirement to consider impacts of climate change and adaptation
5.7 Customer Service:	Engagement to be considered as part of work of SLWG

For further information contact:

Cllr Aileen Morton, Strategic Lead for Commercial Services & Priority Projects
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services
Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services

29th October 2019

APPENDIX A -	COSLA REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE (October 2019)
APPENDIX B -	ADAPTATION SCOTLAND FRAMEWORK
APPENDIX C -	SNH LIST OF CLIMATE CHANGE OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLANGED FOR HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS (28 th October 2019)