

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

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members from their last SLWG meeting where we discussed the live Scottish Government Consultation titles 'Role of Public Sector in tackling Climate Change'. The consultation has now closed and representations were submitted from the Council's Climate Change Board. This report contains the response that has been submitted to the Scottish Government for consideration.
- 1.2 The closing date for submissions 4th December 2019 and the full response can be seen at **APPENDIX A**.

Recommendation

That the SLWG:-

- 1.2.1 Note the submission to the Scottish Government consultation

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APPENDIX A – CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

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

- Practical and operational information about how Climate Change and setting Zero net carbon targets relates to public sector business – specifically for Elected Members, Finance Directors, Senior Management Team, Heads of Property Services, Heads of Amenity Services (Waste Service) and Fleet Services;
- Funded qualification on ‘Climate Solutions’ is very much welcomed and would be interested in exploring whether Argyll and Bute could benefit by staff participation;
- Practical and operational guidance on how public sector can act as a leader / exemplar for wider society – climate change championing;
- Information and guidance on carbon offsetting like carbon capture, tree planting and bioenergy using practical examples and how local authorities can benefit from the existing land uses in their geographical area e.g. forestry (CBH)
- Forecasting on grid decarbonisation to assist target setting;
- Inform Corporate and Senior Management about those innovations and initiatives that have shown success in both mitigating and adapting to climate change. They should further be informed of the implications of their implementation in terms of disruption, costs, etc. Emphasis should be given to those innovations and initiatives that are transformational in achieving a low carbon society.
- Feedback on future prospects to sell/transfer exported electrical power “peer to peer” across the grid i.e. virtually, not private wire. (PG)
- An annual review of funding opportunities that public and third sector bodies can access to invest in/develop climate change. Related measures should be created and circulated annually. (PL)
- Make some kind of incentive – financial or otherwise – for local authorities to get proactively involved and to cause them to get their staff/public involved. (AMcC)
- We would be keen to see more information, training etc. available on the technical solutions which might come forward, we often seem to be learning as we go along when organisations come to us with projects. (Anna Watkiss)

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

- Network is a positive step to support other strategic groups such as COSLA and Leaders Network. However, capacity and expertise is a challenge particularly for smaller public bodies who don’t have dedicated Climate Change Officers / Teams such as Argyll and Bute;
- Rural and smaller public bodies present some key challenges and opportunities around net zero carbon targets like complicated waste and travel economies as well as offsetting options – it is important that both large, small, urban and rural Local Authorities are represented;
- Chief Executives and Elected Members are ultimately the controlling minds for delivering net-zero carbon, so the formation of the network and their inclusion is welcomed. (CBH)

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.** Ambitious yet achievable targets should be identified. Decarbonising of national grid plays key role in this and likely there should be grouping of public bodies with similar characteristics – benchmarking groups. Also carbon credit trading has been practiced for many years between public bodies and there remains of interest for cross boundary / organisation working together to collectively reduce carbon
- Setting targets should provide an impetus to implement the type of transformative action required to achieve net zero emissions. Monitoring is also important to determine progress.
- The scale of the challenge for each target must be in proportion to the individual challenging circumstances of each authority for example consideration must be given to island and rural authorities reliant on ferry services and road haulage. (PL)
- Yes – will all authorities actually be able to get to zero? (AMcC)

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

- **Yes.** Achieving net zero will require transformative action and thereby significant resource. Having to report on an annual basis on how resources are used to reduce emissions will help place a focus on climate change action throughout an organisation. Reporting on what steps are being taken to achieve the reduction will also ensure that the climate change impact would become another metric for consideration (like Finance and Equality impacts) during the policy development process. (PL)

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.** Statutory Guidance is more flexible than pursuing legislation. In this regard, it can respond quicker to changes such as new information, proposed improvements, etc.

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

- **Yes.** Only those Public Bodies that have influence over their emissions, e.g. with their own buildings, fleet, etc., should be required to report. In this respect an annual review should be carried out to determine which bodies can be removed from; added to; amended on the list of reporting Public Sector Bodies. (CBH)

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

- **Yes.** The proposed amendments to the reporting requirements should reduce the difficulty of annual reporting and make reports less repetitive.

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

- Case study or other examples of climate change innovation.

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.

- **Yes.** Transparency is important in encouraging action on climate change and making this a priority. It further promotes continuous improvement and should reduce the bureaucracy associated with information requests (CBH)

Other comments

The public sector also requires sufficient resources, support and power to implement the required changes. Finally, unless legislation starts to align with what are really just aspirational targets, and this is then followed by an appropriate resource, then LAs, or indeed any other public body, will be unable to deliver on the climate change agenda. For renewables in Argyll, there are issues such as grid capacity and Transmission Network Use of System (RNUoS) charges which impact on the viability and scale of projects which can be developed. Appropriate infrastructure, support and funding needs to be in place if local authorities are going to be able to contribute to climate change action.