

Climate Change – Decarbonisation Plan Update 2022

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Addressing Climate Change is a global issue that is hugely reliant on partnership, collaboration and the actions of us all. No single organisation can tackle it in isolation and as a Council we need to show clear leadership and lead by example in all that we do. Our first Decarbonisation Plan was published in 2021 to support and align to our 'green recovery' from the pandemic and much progress has been made to delivering climate commitments outlined in our associated decarbonisation action plan from last year. This year greenhouse gas emissions from the Council have reduced for the 5th year in a row and we are now emitting 27% less CO₂ equivalent during the lifetime of this Council. Our region continues to be one of the lowest carbon emitting local authority areas in the UK due to our natural assets (including forestry and peat), renewable energy developments and low number of polluting industries. We have also engaged and promoted climate issues this year aligned to COP26.
- 1.2 This new Decarbonisation Plan is a refresh of last year's and now sets a 3 year framework to continue our climate journey and routemap to net zero. Many of the actions continue from last year but importantly this year – and as specified that would be achieved – our Council has made a clear commitment to be a net zero organization by 2045 and has also declared a climate emergency befitting the importance and critical nature of the topic. Whilst the main Decarbonisation Plan will be fixed for 3 years, the associated Action Plan (which forms an Appendix of the document) will be continuously updated and reported to both the Climate Change Board and Policy & Resources Committee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Policy & Resources Committee are asked to:-
1. Agree and adopt the Decarbonisation Plan 2022 – 2025;
 2. Note the progress of specific actions from the Decarbonisation Action Plan;
 3. Agree Decarbonisation Action plan is regularly reported to Policy & Resources Committee; and
 4. Note the 27% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the Council this year.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 Our area has long been a leader in wind and hydro power production and this coupled with sparse population, high forest, peatland cover and a low number of polluting sources means as a region we are already one of the lowest net producers of carbon in the UK and almost carbon neutral – way ahead of most other regions.
- 3.2 However, we wish to build on these strong foundations and specifically in the Decarbonisation Plan aim to outline actions of the Council in our business operations to address our own carbon footprint. This will be a new reference point for our own journey towards being a ‘net zero’ organisation by 2045 and also demonstrates our commitment to others in our region who we wish to bring with us. The behaviors and actions of our community, employees, service users and customers have a significant impact on our carbon emissions, so communication and engagement is key to our successful implementation of this plan.
- 3.3 The plan will evolve in future years and the intention is to widen out the scope to include greater integration with local communities and businesses. However, the plan aims to provide focus for the Council to respond to the diverse challenges and activities to urgently reduce and adapt to climate change.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

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| 4.1 Policy | Commitment to activities as outlined in plan. |
| 4.2 Financial | Resources will required to be deployed to deliver actions of the plan. |
| 4.3 Legal | None at present. |
| 4.4 HR | None at present. |
| 4.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: | None at present. |
| 4.5.1 Equalities – protected Characteristics | None at present. |
| 4.5.2 Socio-economic Duty | None at present. |
| 4.5.3 Islands | None at present. |
| 4.6 Climate Change | The adoption and delivery of the content of this report will |

directly contribute to the Council achieving its ambition to being a net zero organisation by 2045.

4.7 Risk

None at present.

4.8 Customer Service

None at present.

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