
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

11 June 2019

Cabinet

Title:	Declaration of a Climate Change Emergency
Purpose:	To recommend that the Council declares a climate change emergency and initiates public debate on the next steps in tackling climate change in North Ayrshire.
Recommendation:	That Cabinet: (i) approves the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency; (ii) instructs officers to undertake public consultation, with a particular focus on engaging young people, on the next steps for a collective response to tackling climate change in North Ayrshire; and (iii) instructs that officers initiate preparation of an updated Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy for publication in autumn 2020.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A UK wide movement to 'declare a climate emergency' has been established. There is a growing consensus that current targets and actions proposed by countries to date are insufficient to achieve the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit the rise in global temperatures. A recently published Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report calls for a 2050 target for net zero emissions and urgent action from member countries to increase their sustainability ambitions.
- 1.2 The objective of declaring a climate change emergency is to raise awareness of the threats of climate change, stimulate debate, and issue a collective call to action to combat the rise in global temperatures.
- 1.3 The Council has been pro-active in establishing civic leadership to tackle climate change. The first Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy (ESCCS) was published in 2014 and was updated in 2017. Successes from the ESCCS are summarised at paragraph 2.7.
- 1.4 The latest ESCCS is due for publication at the beginning of 2021. Given the growing concerns at an international and national level in relation to insufficient progress in tackling climate change, and the particular concerns of young people in relation to this matter, it would be expedient to initiate consultation and preparation of the next iteration of the ESCCS as soon as possible.

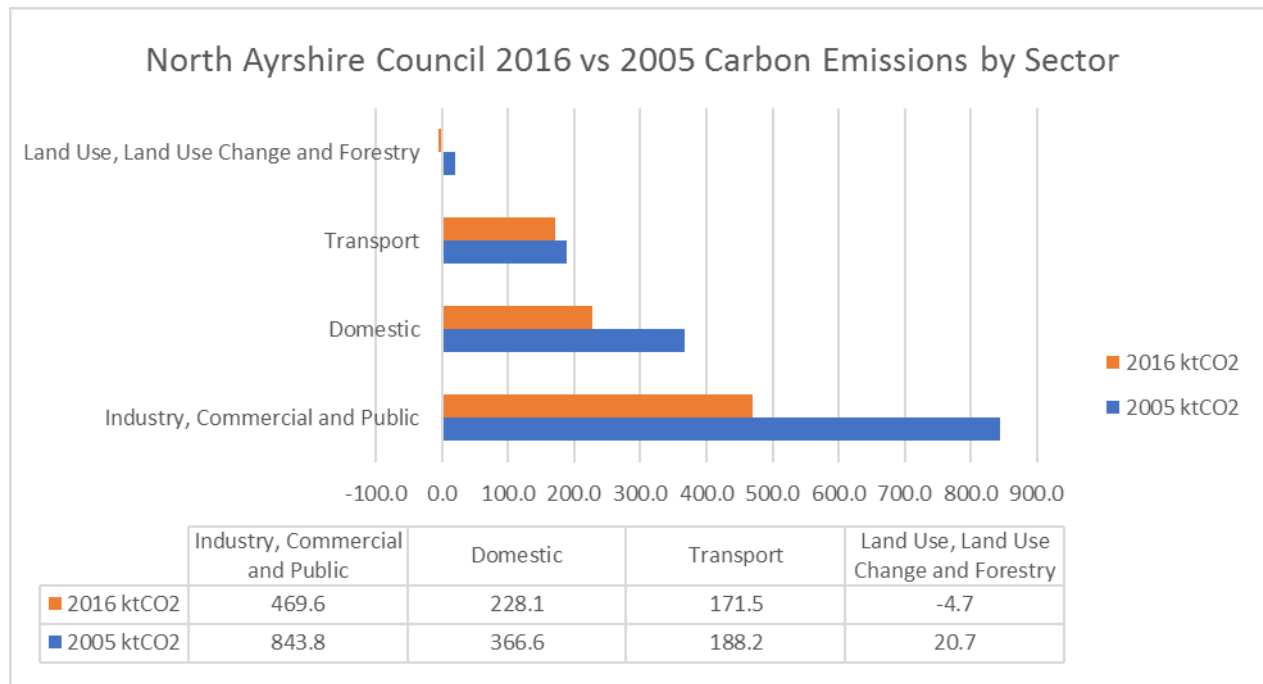
- 1.5 Cabinet is therefore invited to approve the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, and instruct officers to undertake a public consultation, with a particular focus on young people, to inform preparation of an updated Environment Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy for future consideration by Cabinet.

2. Background

- 2.1 In the latter decades of the twentieth century, the phenomenon of climate change, and its potential impacts, gained global profile. In 1988, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an intergovernmental body of the United Nations, was established. The objective of the IPCC is to provide an objective, scientific view of climate change, its natural, political and economic impacts and risks, and possible response options.
- 2.2 The IPCC produces reports that contribute to the work of the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is the main international treaty on climate change. The IPCC prepares regular assessments, one of which was critical to informing the 'Paris Agreement' in 2015. The Paris Agreement's long-term goal is to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels; and to limit the increase to 1.5 °C, since this would substantially reduce the risks and effects of climate change.
- 2.3 A UK wide movement to 'declare a climate emergency' has been established in response to a report by the IPCC published in October 2018 and the United Nations annual Emissions Gap Report which was published in November 2018. These reports set out scientific evidence indicating that global warming has already risen average temperatures by 1.0 °C, and that the current rate of warming suggests we will reach 1.5 °C by the middle of this century. There is a growing consensus that targets and actions proposed by countries to date are insufficient to achieve the Paris Agreement. The IPCC report calls for a 2050 target for net zero emissions and urgent action from member countries to increase their ambitions.
- 2.4 The objective of declaring a climate change emergency is to raise awareness of the threats of climate change, stimulate debate, and issue a collective call to action to combat the rise in global temperatures.
- 2.5 At a national level, the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill is currently making its way through Scottish Parliament. The Bill currently sets a 90% reduction target in carbon emissions in Scotland by 2050 (based on 1990 baseline levels). A call to the Independent Committee on Climate Change (CCC) was issued in October 2018 for them to provide advice on reductions required by 2050 to meet the Paris Agreement commitment within the UK. These findings have recently been published and recommend a target of net zero emissions across the UK by 2050. Moreover, the report calls for Scotland to achieve net zero emissions by 2045, given the greater potential for emission removal than the rest of the UK (through utilising unused oil and gas fields to store carbon, and the available space for tree planting due to lower population density). This announcement is expected to inform an update to the 90% target within the Bill, which will likely become 100% by 2045, with interim targets of 70% reduction by 2030 and 90% reduction by 2040, as the CCC have evidenced that such targets are technically feasible.

2.6 Each year, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) produce a breakdown of carbon emissions across local authority areas throughout the UK. The latest dataset, published in 2018, reports that the carbon emissions across North Ayrshire in 2016 are 864.6 ktCO₂ (kilo tonnes of carbon dioxide). This equates to a 39% reduction from the 2005 baseline year. Figure 1 below identifies the main sectors monitored and their associated carbon emissions in 2016:

Figure 1: North Ayrshire Council area Carbon Emissions



2.7 The Council has been pro-active in establishing civic leadership to tackle climate change. The first Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy (ESCCS) was published in 2014 and was updated in 2017. Collectively, the ESCCS has:

- Established a 40% target for reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, based on a 2005 baseline. Progress is ahead of schedule in meeting both the 40% target for the whole of North Ayrshire and for the Council's estate. The current reduction figures for these are 39% and 35% respectively. The increased area wide performance is mostly due to large carbon reductions in the domestic and industrial sectors due to ongoing decarbonisation of the electricity grids, energy efficiency improvements, and increasingly stringent emissions regulations
- Delivered almost 10MW of installed renewable or low-carbon energy generation through the Council' solar panel retrofit programme, biomass retrofit programme, and landfill gas recovery schemes
- Led to £1.000m of investment in energy conservation measures in Council buildings, as part of a Non-Domestic Energy Efficiency Programme in partnership with Scottish Futures Trust, saving over 372 tonnes CO₂ over the lifetime of the project
- Introduced a 'car club' scheme to reduce emissions associate with staff business travel through the provision of low and zero carbon vehicles
- Replaced over 60% of street lighting across North Ayrshire with more energy efficient LED lighting

- Provided support and resources to primary schools through the Primary School Energy Challenge, reducing energy consumption by 270 MWh and encouraging low carbon behaviours

2.8 While climate change is an issue which has implications for everyone and calls for change come from across the demographic spectrum, young people across the country have recently been participating in climate change strikes and other profile-raising activities to challenge policy-makers at all levels to increase ambition and bring a sense of urgency to tackling climate change.

2.9 The latest ESCCS is due for publication at the beginning of 2021. Given the growing concerns at an international and national level in relation to insufficient progress in tackling climate change, and the particular concerns of young people in relation to the climate change issue, it would be expedient to initiate preparation of the next iteration of the ESCCS as soon as possible.

3. Proposals

3.1 To inform the next ESCCS, it is proposed to undertake a North Ayrshire wide public consultation to gather information and ideas to inform the response to climate change.

3.2 The primary consultation tool will be CONSUL, which is a digital consultative platform which allows people to respond to consultation questions and participate in an online debate. The ESCCS CONSUL consultation will be entitled 'Climate Change: Just Cool It'. The consultation will be promoted in early years centres, primary schools, secondary schools and further education establishments across North Ayrshire, and will be designed to:

- Raise awareness of, and stimulate debate about, climate change and its implications
- Provide advice and guidance on simple steps people can take to combat climate change. This will be linked to other promotional campaigns, for example the Council's Zero Waste Strategy
- Gather thoughts and ideas to inform the future response to tackling climate change in North Ayrshire, building on our progress to date
- Provide opportunities for teaching staff to link the consultation to relevant Curriculum for Excellence outcomes

3.3 Consultation with our young people will be promoted and encouraged through a number of methods. The CONSUL platform will be promoted through the Youth Services social media platforms.

3.4 Using our Participation and Citizenship Network, Members of Scottish Youth Parliament will be encouraged to consult with local constituents throughout North Ayrshire. There is also the opportunity to engage with our locality youth forums, youth council and hard to reach young people through key partners. We will encourage schools to participate by linking our locality staff with key schools.

3.5 The consultation will also be promoted through the Community Engagement Network, Community Councils, and Locality Partnerships.

- 3.6 The consultation exercise is proposed to launch in August to 2019, to coincide with the new academic year, and run until December 2019. This will also allow the consultation to be publicised as part of 'Climate Week Scotland' in October 2019. All consultation feedback will be collated, reviewed, and used to inform preparation of the third ESCCS for consideration by Cabinet later in 2020.
- 3.7 The North Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2031 (LBAP) was approved by Cabinet in May 2019. The impacts of climate change have significant implications for the future viability of our habitats and species. In addition, our habitats have the potential to play a valuable role in carbon sequestration. Following publication of an updated ESCCS, the LBAP will be reviewed to reflect any additional or amended actions which are required in order to align with our climate change response.
- 3.8 Cabinet is therefore invited to declare a climate change emergency, as a pre-cursor to initiating a public debate on tackling climate change in North Ayrshire. It is proposed that this declaration is followed by a North Ayrshire wide consultation event, to engage communities by stimulating debate on the appropriate collective response to climate change. The outputs from this consultation process will be used to inform the third iteration of the ESCCS for future consideration by Cabinet.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial:	There are no financial implications arising from the report. The proposed consultation activity and preparation of the third iteration of the Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy will be funded from existing revenue budgets. Any funding requirements for new initiatives identified through the ESCCS update will be considered when the document is presented for approval.
Human Resources:	None.
Legal:	None.
Equality/Socio-economic Duty:	The proposed new Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy will include actions to alleviate fuel poverty for those on the lowest incomes within North Ayrshire.
Children and Young People:	The report proposes consultation with children and young people to empower them to share their views on tackling climate change within North Ayrshire.
Environmental & Sustainability:	The proposals contribute directly to the new Council Plan priority of 'A Sustainable Place' by encouraging action to further reduce emissions in North Ayrshire.
Key Priorities:	As above.
Community Benefits:	Community benefits will be sought as part of the procurement process for any new projects identified in the forthcoming ESCCS update.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation will be undertaken with communities, including young people, subject to approval of this report.

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For further information please contact **David Hammond, Senior Manager (Housing Strategy & Corporate Sustainability)**, on **01294 324764**.

Background Papers