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# NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

02 June 2026

## Cabinet

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**Title:** Fleet Decarbonisation

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to update Cabinet on progress made to date with decarbonisation of the Council Fleet and to provide details of the further proposed decarbonisation-first approach work going forward.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that Cabinet:

- notes the progress made to date in decarbonising the fleet, and against the actions set out in the May 2023 Cabinet paper.
- agrees the decarbonisation-first approach for fleet replacement outlined at para 2.17
- notes that the Council's current fleet decarbonisation actions will continue to evolve to reflect the Scottish Government's refreshed Climate Change Plan 2026-2040 and the awaited public sector fleet decarbonisation action plan.

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Significant progress has been made in decarbonising the Council Fleet which already includes 87 EVs. In addition, there are a number of further 24 Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles identified for replacement in the current financial year.
- 1.2 Ongoing expansion of the EV charging network has also continued and has seen additional provision for both workplace and public electric charging network points across the Authority. The imminent commencement of the Scottish Government funded charging network expansion across Ayrshire will also see an additional 307 public charge points being rolled-out across Ayrshire, 107 of which will be in North Ayrshire.
- 1.3 The Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan was updated in March 2026 and during 206/27, our fleet decarbonisation actions will be refreshed to align with the updated plan.

1.4 A Decarbonisation-First approach will be adopted to ensure the transition to a decarbonised fleet can be effectively managed and delivered.

## **2. Background**

2.1 In the Programme for Government of 2019, as part of a “Mission Zero” for transport, the Scottish Government made the commitment of: “creating the conditions to phase out the need for all new petrol and diesel vehicles in Scotland’s public sector fleet by 2030, and phasing out the need for all petrol and diesel cars from the public sector fleet by 2025”.

2.2 Progress continues to be shaped by the availability of suitable Electric Vehicle alternatives and charging infrastructure at both national and local level. While these conditions are still developing, overall public fleet decarbonisation has reached 19% during this period, providing a strong foundation for further transition as technology and infrastructure continues to improve.

2.3 The challenges of decarbonising transport, and of the wider journey to net zero, are now well recognised in Government policy. This is reflected in the latest iteration of the Scottish Government’s Climate Change Plan (2026 to 2040), where earlier stretch targets have evolved into Carbon Budgets, helping to provide a more practical and sustainable framework for long-term progress.

2.4 The plan also recognises that, in 2019, the Scottish Government set ambitious staged targets for public sector fleet decarbonisation, focused on different vehicle types and supporting the phased removal of petrol and diesel vehicles, beginning with cars, followed by light vans and then heavier and more specialist vehicles.

2.5 Scottish Government has worked with the public sector to develop a draft public sector fleet decarbonisation action plan and is now consulting key stakeholders across the public and private sectors on the actions identified within that plan. Publication of the final version is awaited. In the meantime, the Council will continue to take a decarbonisation-first approach, prioritising suitable lower-emission and zero-emission vehicle options wherever these are available and practical.

2.6 The draft action plan reflects the continued commitment of Scottish Government and the wider public sector to fleet decarbonisation, helping to strengthen support for the procurement of electric and ultra-low emission vehicles and identifying actions that will further align public spending with emissions reduction.

### North Ayrshire Council’s Progress

2.7 In May 2023 a report was presented to Cabinet providing an update on the Fleet decarbonisation journey. A variety of recommendations and next steps were agreed in support of decarbonising the Council’s vehicle Fleet which would support the Council’s commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

2.8 The actions and recommendations, which are incorporated into the Fleet Asset Management Plan, were in line with advice received from our external advisors (EVP

solutions) and national commitments and ambitions within the 2019-2020 Programme for Government. Significant progress has been made in delivering on these, in summary:

- **Vehicle Purchase:** The transition to a lower-emission fleet is well underway, with 87 vehicles already replaced by electric alternatives and further progress continuing as the market develops.
- **Budget Utilisation:** Existing investment has supported strong early delivery, with 87 EVs now in place and at least 24 more zero-emission vehicles planned for 2026/27.
- **Preparatory Work:** EV deployment is being supported by practical driver engagement and training, helping staff build confidence and make the most effective use of new vehicles.
- **Government Lobbying:** The Council is making good use of national and regional partnerships to strengthen its case for support and maximise future funding opportunities.
- **Capital Programme Review:** Additional approved investment in vehicles and charging infrastructure is providing a stronger foundation for continued fleet decarbonisation.
- **Heavy Fleet Research:** Positive progress has also been made for the heavy fleet, with HVO successfully introduced within our refuse collection vehicles as a practical interim measure to support emission reductions.
- **Digital Strategy Opportunities:** Telematics data is giving a clearer understanding of fleet use, supporting smarter vehicle replacement, better route planning and more targeted charging infrastructure.
- **Governance:** Governance arrangements have been strengthened through the creation of a dedicated officer fleet decarbonisation group reporting into the already established Climate Change Steering Group partnership.
- **Partnership Synergies:** Partnership working continues to create opportunities for collaboration, with regular reporting helping to keep fleet decarbonisation firmly on the shared agenda.
- **Charging Infrastructure:** Completed and ongoing planned expansion of EV charging across Ayrshire will create valuable opportunities to support both public access and future fleet charging needs.

2.9 Work continues in transitioning to zero-emission fleet vehicles and progress has been made in terms of investment in both EVs (Electric Vehicles) and supporting charging infrastructure with additional/revised investment being approved in February 2024, with a further £5.430m being allocated within the capital plan to support the decarbonisation of the Council's fleet, supplementing the main vehicle replacement programme.

2.10 A previous EV working group has now been progressed into a fleet decarbonisation group, which is being supported by the Transformation Team. The group reports to our already established Climate Change Steering Group, which although without decision making powers, was established to coordinate progress in implementing the Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy.

2.11 The fleet decarbonisation group provides a forum to consider and implement a number of fleet decarbonisation actions and priorities in a collaborative way ensuring user buy in through considering service and operational needs to be met whilst continuing

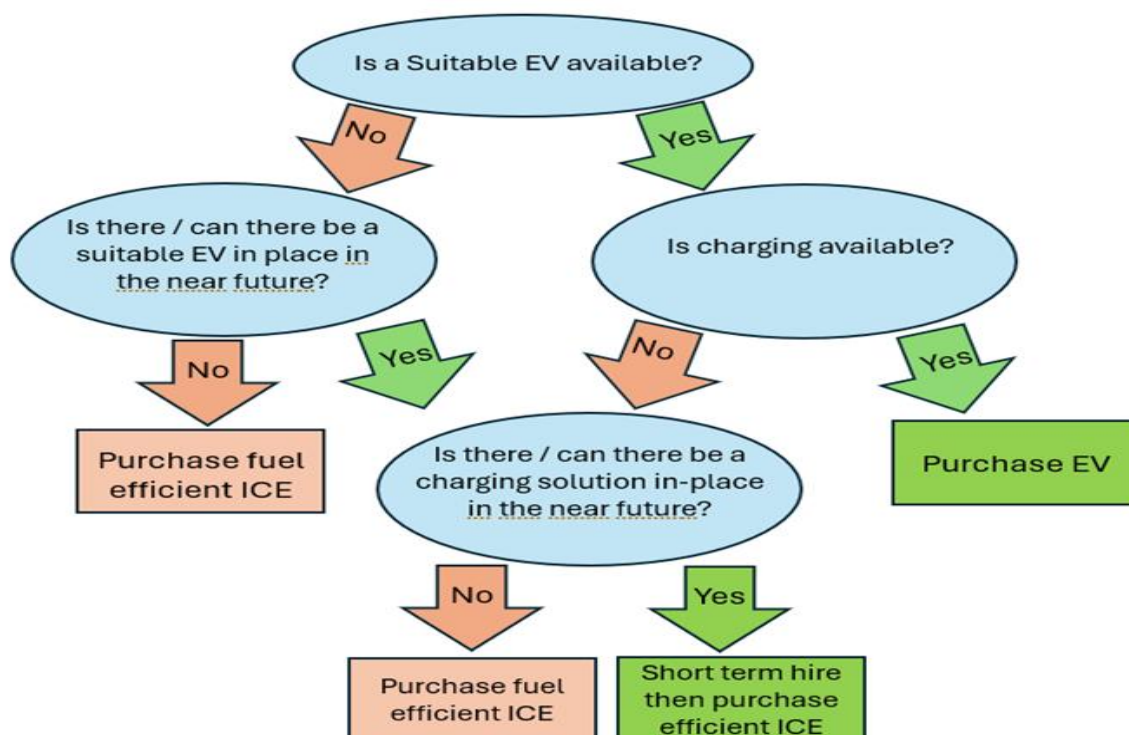
progress in decarbonising the fleet. The key objectives of the group, which consists of cross directorate representatives, is to oversee and manage the ongoing implementation and development of the decarbonisation of the Council's vehicle fleet. The activities include, refreshing, monitoring and implementation of the decarbonisation plan, co-ordination of activity across all the relevant services within the Council and reporting on progress.

### Current Position and Opportunities

- 2.12 Cabinet approval in May 2023 marked an important step forward in the transition to a more sustainable decarbonised fleet. Good progress has been made in relation to the acquisition of suitable alternative electric vehicles, where we currently operate 87 EVs, which equates to 21.9% of the initially identified number of fleet vehicles.
- 2.13 The Council continues to make positive progress in planning for fleet decarbonisation in the short to medium term, while recognising that not all of the remaining 344 vehicles currently have suitable zero-emission alternatives available. The greatest opportunities for transition are within vehicle types where the market is developing most quickly, while for larger vehicles, sweepers and plant, suitable electric options are still emerging.
- 2.14 The Transport team continues to work proactively with a range of manufacturers to arrange demonstrations and pilots of electric equivalent vehicles. This is providing valuable insight into how well different options can support service needs and is helping to identify the areas where further development in charging, payload, range and towing capability will strengthen future opportunities for transition.
- 2.15 Several pilots have been successful which will result in a further 24 vehicles (at a cost of £1.10m) being replaced by zero emission alternatives during 2026/27. This will increase the number of EV's within the fleet to 111 and 27.95% of the identified fleet.
- 2.16 Work will continue to progress in the decarbonisation of the fleet through a decarbonisation-first approach which will ensure our net-zero journey and service delivery needs going forward.

### Decarbonisation First Approach

- 2.17 To maximise progress and outcomes, whilst still recognising operational needs and vehicle replacement availability, the Council has a clear opportunity to adopt a decarbonisation-first approach to fleet vehicle replacement. Where available, decarbonised fleet options will be progressed as first option. However, in the limited cases where suitable low-emission alternatives are not yet available, suitable vehicles with the latest Euro engine technologies for ICE vehicles will be procured. This will support a planned and practical transition, allowing time for further pilots to be completed, additional EV alternatives to be identified, and the necessary supporting infrastructure works to be progressed. The following diagram illustrates this decarbonisation-first approach.



## EV Charging Framework

2.18 To facilitate the position where Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) can be successfully deployed into the Council’s fleet, an overall charging framework, including infrastructure, policy and guidance, also needs to be in place.

2.19 The Council is already making strong progress in expanding workplace charging, with 56 workplace charge points installed to date, equating to 107 sockets. Previous assessments identified a potential need for a comprehensive charging framework. While delivering this will require a phased and coordinated approach, the key areas for development are now well understood, including:

- Identifying the most suitable locations for future charge points
- Working through premises ownership arrangements to support delivery
- Assessing available power capacity to inform future investment
- Completing pre-engagement work to support the procurement process

2.20 In addition to 56 workplace charging units, the Council has installed 62 publicly available EV charge points, adding to the 80 privately owned publicly available charge points across North Ayrshire. £2.87m of funding has been secured from Transport Scotland for North, East and South Ayrshire Councils to secure a private sector partnership to install a further 307 charge points across Ayrshire.

2.21 A procurement exercise has been undertaken, led by East Ayrshire Council, this contract will commence in June 2026. Part of this procurement activity included a specific lot for fleet EV charge point installation, supporting a more efficient roll out of workplace charge points. We will utilise this to expand the number of work-place

charge points available, which will be funded through the Council's already allocated fleet decarbonisation budget. The anticipated spend for 26/27 will be circa £600k.

### **3. Proposals**

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- notes the progress made to date in decarbonising the fleet.
- agrees the decarbonisation-first approach for fleet replacement outlined at para 2.17
- notes that the Council's current fleet decarbonisation actions will continue to evolve to reflect the Scottish Government's refreshed Climate Change Plan 2026-2040 and the awaited public sector fleet decarbonisation action plan

### **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

#### **Financial**

4.1 The Council has reprofiled its fleet decarbonisation budget to reflect a realistic pace of delivery, with £2.029m planned for 2026/27, including £1.429m for vehicles and £0.600m for charging infrastructure, and a further £2.702m in 2027/28.

Alongside the wider vehicle replacement programme, which provides £2.99m in 2026/27 and £2.00m per year thereafter, this supports a coordinated decarbonisation-first approach to replacing vehicles and expanding the charging network over the coming years.

The Sustainability Team continue to apply for external funding to support the roll-out of fleet decarbonisation infrastructure.

#### **Human Resources**

4.2 Development of a comprehensive charging framework will require support from the workforce in order to be successfully implemented.

#### **Legal**

4.3 Fleet decarbonisation is a practical legal expectation arising from statutory climate duties under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, associated reporting regulations, and statutory guidance issued in March 2026. Fleet emissions are classed as direct (Scope 1) emissions, meaning councils are legally required to take proportionate action to reduce them, report progress annually, and demonstrate alignment with Scotland's 2045 net-zero target.

#### **Equality/Socio-economic**

4.4 None

#### **Climate Change and Carbon**

4.5 Decarbonisation of the Council's vehicle fleet is a critical element of the Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy.

### **Key Priorities**

4.6 The decarbonisation of the Council fleet directly supports the Council's net-zero priority.

### **Community Wealth Building**

4.7 None.

### **Islands Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA)**

4.8 None

### **United Nations Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

4.9 None

### **Consumer Duty**

4.10 None

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 The Cross Directorate Working Group and Climate Change Steering Group are consulted on the decarbonisation of the fleet proposals.

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For further information please contact **Laurence Cree, Head of Sustainability, Transport & Corporate Property**, on **01294 323960**.

### **Background Papers**

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