
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

28 January 2020

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Title:	Climate Change
Purpose:	To provide an update on progress in tackling climate change.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the Committee notes the actions undertaken across services to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Audit and Scrutiny Committee has requested an update on the Council's action on climate change.
- 1.2 In June 2019 North Ayrshire Council declared a Climate Emergency, committing to achieve net-zero emissions and to increase actions being taken to mitigate climate change.
- 1.3 The Council's third Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy is being developed, identifying priorities to reduce and remove emissions, with actions in:
 - Affordable Warmth
 - Green Economy
 - Transport & Travel
 - Natural & Built Environment
 - Sustainable Operation
 - Adaptation
 - Emission Absorption
- 1.4 A cross-service approach to tackling climate change has contributed to significant successes which are assisting in achieving the Council's emission reduction targets, whilst protecting areas at risk to extreme weather events and future impacts of climate change.
- 1.5 A key factor in our approach to mitigating climate change is a realisation of the significant impact that behavioural change can have. To that end an online consultation 'Climate Change: Just Cool It,' was launched in August 2019, seeking views on climate change from young people and those who live or work in North Ayrshire. The findings of this will help to inform the next iteration of the Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy which is expected to be finalised during summer 2020 and will outline

key actions for the next 3 years aimed at further mitigating the impacts of climate change.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Paris Agreement, established in 2016, is a United Nations agreement to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to strive to limit the increase to 1.5 °C. The World Meteorological Organisation has recently reported average global temperatures for 2019 (January to October) of approximately 1.1°C.
- 2.2 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. A report published by the IPCC in October 2018 recommends immediate action be taken before the impacts of climate change become irreversible. The report states there are only 11 years left to limit global temperature increase to 1.5°C, which has led to global declarations of a Climate Emergency.
- 2.3 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 (2045 target for Scotland) and urgent action from member countries to increase their ambitions.
- 2.4 Scotland is one of 22 countries to declare a Climate Emergency, with the Scottish Government proposing an amendment to the Climate Change Bill by setting a target to achieve net zero emissions by 2045.
- 2.5 North Ayrshire Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019, committing to become net-zero carbon across the region. This commitment requires both emission reduction and absorption from the atmosphere.

Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy

- 2.6 North Ayrshire Council has been pro-active in reducing carbon emissions since our first Carbon Management Plan (CMP) in 2005. The CMP was superseded in 2014 with the first Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy (ESCCS), which was updated in 2017.
- 2.7 The ESCCS 2017-20 builds on the success on the first strategy and sets an area wide target to reduce carbon emissions by 40% by 2030 (based on a 2005 baseline year). In order to achieve this ambition, a series of priorities were identified within five thematic workstreams, specifically Affordable Warmth, A Green Economy, Transport & Travel, Natural & Built Environment and Sustainable Operations.
- 2.8 Some examples of achievements made through the ESCCS are given below:
 - The current carbon reduction figures are 39.9% reduction across the Council's estate and 44.6% reduction North Ayrshire wide. The area wide emissions include those from industrial and commercial, domestic, and transport sectors.

- Successfully securing approximately £10.5million of funding to provide external wall insulation to 2,231 homes through the Home Energy Efficiency Programme: Area Based Scheme to reduce heat loss and subsequent heating requirements.
- Installing our first low carbon heat networks fuelled by biomass boilers during the redevelopment of two sheltered housing units in Dalry and Stevenston.
- Installing solar PV panels on roofs of 290 Council houses, saving tenants on average £188 per year.
- Investing nearly £1m in energy efficiency measures such as boiler replacement, LED lighting and enhanced controls to 14 non-domestic properties through the Non-Domestic Energy Efficiency framework.
- The Council's operational vehicle fleet now incorporates 10 electric vehicles and a number of low emission vehicles
- Our sustainable business travel arrangements and employee car pool scheme have contributed to a reduction of almost 900,000 miles driven per year on business. An increasing number of miles actually driven are now being facilitated by the pool of low emission and electric vehicles. This has contributed to a significant carbon emissions reduction.
- Installing a number of publicly accessible electric vehicle charge points to support and encourage the uptake of electric vehicles across North Ayrshire.
- Working in partnership with the University of Glasgow, for 4th year engineering students to base their final year project on identifying sustainable solutions for local businesses in North Ayrshire.

2.9 Following the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration, a consultation has been published which will be used in the development of the next Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy (ESCCS 2020-23). The third iteration of the ESCCS will contain actions to support our commitment to become net-zero carbon, considering carbon emission reduction and absorption from the atmosphere. Examples of actions currently being developed are as follows:

- Generating renewable energy has the potential to meet a variety of Council objectives, specifically reducing carbon emissions, tackling fuel poverty, generating income and supporting local jobs and businesses. An action within the Renewable Energy Strategy resulted in the production of business cases for solar and wind projects which were cost prohibitive at that time. The proposals are being updated to include current market values.
- An Electric Vehicle (EV) strategy is being developed to support and encourage the uptake of EVs throughout North Ayrshire. Officers have recently begun working with external partners to investigate the feasibility of a proposal to generate renewable electricity to supply an Electric Vehicle charging hub, and utilise battery storage opportunities within building and transport sectors.
- The Council is also looking at ways to remove emissions from the atmosphere, by planting trees (which absorb carbon dioxide through the process of photosynthesis). There is a case for commercial planting, which is being investigated at present. There is also an opportunity to further engage with primary schools in partnership with the Woodland Trust's Tree Planting programme. It is hoped this will enhance the Primary School Energy Challenge, currently delivered to primary schools in North Ayrshire to encourage more sustainable behaviours in energy, waste and transport.
- The Scottish Government's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) is a pilot project (prior to the provision of such strategies becoming mandatory) aimed at decarbonising the heat network and removing energy efficiency as a

driver for fuel poverty. North Ayrshire Council was successful in its bid for funding to develop an overarching LHEES for the area. This will allow the Council to have a clear method for future LHEES delivery by prioritising areas for further investigation.

2.10 The Council's commitment to tackling climate change is clear and well documented. The ESCCS 2020-2023 will include actions and a target to work towards achieving net-zero emissions and deliver on our Climate Emergency commitment.

Zero Waste Strategy

2.11 North Ayrshire Council's Zero Waste Strategy 2018 – 2022 outlines a clear commitment to preventing, minimising, re-using and recycling waste that is produced both externally and internally within the Council. The strategy contains a wide range of actions to move North Ayrshire towards being a Zero Waste Council, for example implementing waste awareness campaigns and initiatives which promote reuse of waste resources, working with community sector based waste projects which promote sustainable waste resource management and delivering an enhanced waste and recycling service on the mainland in order to improve participation in our recycling services and to increase capture of recyclable materials.

2.12 Some examples of achievements made through the Zero Waste Strategy are as follows:

- The Council continues to be one of the highest performing for household waste recycling in Scotland with 54.6% achieved for 2018 (greater than the national rate of 44.7%).
- A Plastic Waste Prevention Plan has been developed to support North Ayrshire Council's ambition to become a 'Plastic Free Council' by 2022
- Working as part of the Clyde Valley Residual Waste Partnership to establish a 25-year contract with Viridor, delivering a solution to divert waste from landfill following the closure of Shewalton landfill site in March 2018. The solution recovers additional recyclates with the remaining non-recyclable waste delivered to a new Energy Recovery Facility to recover heat and produce electricity from the waste.
- Successful implementation of the enhanced waste and recycling service, and implementation of a Birth to Potty Real Nappy initiative
- Working in partnership with third sector organisations on Arran to progress Circular Economy opportunities on the island
- Successful development of the internal Waste Action Reuse Portal (WARP IT), to divert reusable office furniture from final disposal

2.13 As part of the Zero Waste Strategy, the Council recognises the importance of engaging with young people and supporting residents in changing waste management behaviours.

2.14 Actions within the Zero Waste Strategy will continue to be implemented through to 2022, with particular focus given to becoming a plastic free local authority, engaging with schools to further promote sustainable waste resource management and the immediate benefits for the environment, and liaise with commercial waste producers to improve waste management practices within their premises.

Flood Risk Management Plan

2.15 The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 sets out a national approach to flood risk management. Scotland has been divided into 12 Local Plan Districts (LPDs) by SEPA. The 'Ayrshire' district comprises the North, East and South Ayrshire Council areas. North Ayrshire is the lead authority for the Ayrshire LPD. Significant work is ongoing across Ayrshire, and North Ayrshire, to mitigate and manage the impacts of Flood Risk. A key aspect of the developing work in relation to flood risk management has been extensive community engagement and community workshops have been helping to inform local communities of the risks and to seek views on the proposed measures being developed.

2.16 Some examples of the achievements made through the Flood Risk Management Plan are:

- Design of the Upper Garnock Flood Protection Scheme. The scheme is currently out to tender and due to commence in Summer 2020
- Approval of Millport Coastal Flood Protection Scheme, due to be formally confirmed shortly, for commencement of works in 2021
- Options appraisal for Millburn Flood Protection Works in Millport is being finalised and construction is planned for 2021

2.17 Work is ongoing in the development of the second cycle of the Ayrshire Local Flood Risk Management Plan, planned to run between 2022-2028, with three further flood protection schemes being proposed for inclusion in the plan. These include proposals for works at Brodick and Lamblash in Arran, an upgrade to the Keppernburn Culvert in Fairlie, and major flood protection works in the Lower Irvine Valley which, if implemented, would provide flood protection to many homes and businesses in the Irvine area.

2.18 North Ayrshire Council continue to be proactive in engaging with the public and taking action to address climate change issues across the domestic, non-domestic and transport sectors. By encouraging low carbon behaviours, investigating opportunities for innovation, and enhancing the natural environment, the Council aims to become a net-zero emission local authority.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that the Committee notes the actions undertaken across services to mitigate, and adapt to, the impacts of climate change.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 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

4.2 None

Legal

4.3 None

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 The proposed new Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy will include actions to alleviate fuel poverty for those on the lowest incomes within North Ayrshire, supporting children and young people to have warmer homes. A consultation with children and young people aims to empower them to share their views on tackling climate change within North Ayrshire.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 The proposals contribute directly to the new Council Plan priority outcome of 'A Sustainable Environment' by encouraging action to further reduce emissions in North Ayrshire.

Key Priorities

4.6 This report directly supports the Council Plan (2019-24) Priority - Inspiring Place.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 The 5 pillars of community wealth building will be considered in the further development of the forthcoming Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy 2020-2023.

5. Consultation

5.1 Views have been sought from a number of Council services in developing this update report for consideration.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **Yvonne Baulk, Head of Physical Environment**, on **01294 324542**.

Background Papers

0