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**To:** Leadership Board

**On:** 12 September 2019

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**Report by:** Chief Executive

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**Heading:** Climate Change emergency

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**1. Summary**

- 1.1 On 27 June 2019, Renfrewshire Council declared a climate emergency, with many other local authorities across the UK and Scotland also making this declaration. The actions that are required to respond to the climate emergency, are potentially complex and multi-faceted, and it is recognised that these need to be supported by organisations across all sectors, and in partnership with local communities.
- 1.2 At the meeting on 27 June 2019, Council also agreed that a cross party working group be established to explore options for action and to make recommendations to Council by end of financial year 2019/20. The purpose of this paper is to engage further with elected members on the establishment of this working group, in order that it achieves its purpose and meets the requirements of all stakeholders.

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**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Board consider arrangements in relation to the establishment of a climate emergency cross party working group in Renfrewshire.

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### **3. Background**

- 3.1. On 27 June 2019, full Council approved two motions relating to the declaration of a climate emergency in Renfrewshire. These were tabled by Councillors McCartin and A Doig, Cllr Don and Adam McGregor, with an amendment accepted from Councillors McIntyre and Graham. Renfrewshire Council is one of a number of local authorities in Scotland that have taken the decision to formally declare a climate emergency during 2019.
- 3.2. The motions require officers to progress a range of activities, with full detail on these activities attached as appendix 1 to this report. A key action to be progressed is the establishment of a cross party working group, the aim of which would be to examine in detail the actions that could be taken to address the declared climate emergency.
- 3.3. This paper is seeking the views of members of the Cross Party Sounding Board on the establishment of this group, in order to ensure that this group has the right approach and membership and is able to work at pace to report back with recommendations to full Council by the end of the financial year 2019/20.

### **4. Establishment of Climate Emergency Working group**

- 4.1. As set out above, the Climate Emergency working group is being established as a direct response to the Council declaring a climate emergency on 27 June 2019. The declaration received support across all political groups, with agreement reached for a cross party working group to be established as soon as possible to consider what actions could be taken to address the declared climate emergency.
- 4.2. As elected members will be aware, the Cross Party Sounding Board was established in 2017 to provide an opportunity for cross party discussion on matters of Council-wide relevance. In terms of its remit it could be considered appropriate for the board to lead discussion and consideration of all issues related to the climate emergency in line with the Council decision. However a key limitation which members of the Board may wish to consider would be in terms of its membership which is set and has been agreed by Council. This could limit the ability of the sounding board to involve and engage local and national organisations, community groups and partners in a working group, all of whom could contribute to the discussion and the exploration of ideas and recommendations.
- 4.3. Further, members of the board may wish to consider whether the creation of a working group with wider membership and participation, may achieve greater traction, by involving key stakeholders in identifying the key issues and

opportunities at an early stage, as well as in drafting local recommendations for Council.

- 4.4 Should a cross party working group be established which is distinct to this board, it is suggested that it would be appropriate for members of this Board to form the core membership of the climate emergency working group. This would ensure the same level of political representation as the Cross Party Sounding Board. Should political groups wish to nominate a substitute or alternative elected member to the cross party group, this could also be supported.
- 4.5 In terms of the activities being undertaken to promote cross party working on climate change in other local authorities, there are a range of approaches emerging. For example, Glasgow City Council recently published a report on its response to its declared Climate Emergency, which has been produced by its own cross party working group on this issue. It's working group met on a monthly basis, with representation from all four political groups on the Council, as well as citizen activist groups, key policy leaders, and the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce. The group has met on a monthly basis and considered a number of presentations from speakers on a range of issues relating to climate and sustainability. The report is available as follows:  
<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewDoc.asp?c=P62AFQDN0GZLZ3DN0G>
- 4.6 In addition to the membership and format of the group, members of the Cross Party Sounding Board may also wish to suggest particular areas which it would like the working group to explore in its initial phases, with the remit and work programme being fully agreed by the established group.
- 4.7 Officers will fully support the working group by organising meetings; preparing briefings on all required matters and in terms of securing internal and external speakers with expertise on matters raised. As there is a requirement for the working group to report to Council by the end of the 19/20 financial year, officers will support the group to work at the pace required to achieve this deadline. An internal officer group is also being established to support this work programme, incorporating different areas of professional expertise.

## **5. Key areas for discussion**

- 5.1 In summary, following on from the decision of Council to establish a cross party working group in relation to the declared climate emergency, the views of members of the board are invited on:
- Membership of the cross party working group to be established
  - Frequency of meetings
  - Specific areas of interest/focus suggested for the working group.

## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – n/a
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – n/a.
3. **Community Planning** – climate change and sustainability are key overarching principles agreed within the Renfrewshire Local Outcome Improvement Plan.
4. **Legal** - none.
5. **Property/Assets** – none.
6. **Information Technology** – n/a
7. **Equality & Human Rights** – none.
  - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – none.
9. **Procurement** – none.
10. **Risk** – n/a
11. **Privacy Impact** – none.
12. **COSLA** - Welcomed the risk based and proportionate approach to audits.
13. **Climate Risk** – as per the content of this report.

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## Appendix 1

“That this Council believes: (a) That all governments have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and local government recognises it cannot and should not wait for national government to act;

(b) That it is important for the residents of Renfrewshire that the council and other public authorities commit to reducing CO2 eq emissions and work towards carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;

(c) That bold climate action can deliver economic benefits by way of new jobs, economic savings, market opportunities and improved well-being.

That this council agrees to: (e) declare a “Climate Emergency”; (f) pledge to work proactively with others to make Renfrewshire carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions; (g) continue to work with partners and community groups across Renfrewshire to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans; (g) assist communities to become more resilient to the impacts of global warming, particularly to flooding and to drought;

(h) ensure that all reports in preparation for the 2020/21 budget will take into account the actions the council will take to address this emergency;

(i) report to Full Council before the end of the financial year 2019/20 with the actions the Council has, and will take, to address this emergency.

The Scottish Government on 14 May 2019 declared that there was a global climate emergency. The evidence was irrefutable, and the science was clear. We all have a part to play: Government, councils, individuals, communities, businesses, other organisations. It was not too late to turn things around. Council therefore further agrees: (j) to recognise that there is an environment and climate emergency; (k) that this emergency could impact on all areas of Council policy; (l) That a cross-party working group is established to examine in detail what actions could be taken to address this emergency; and (m) That officers begin, without delay, to prepare options for the working group to consider. This Council also further agrees to: (n) include climate change in the Council Register of Strategic Risks; (o) include climate risk as a category in reports to council meetings and boards. This should be introduced as a heading in the implications of report section in the same manner as financial, legal and equality & human rights issues; (p) ask all electricity suppliers to the council how much of their electricity production is certified by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin or has been carbon offset. If electricity is supplied centrally then write to the Scottish Government asking the same question; and (q) investigate the feasibility of setting up a revolving fund for energy efficiency improvements to buildings within the council estate. The fund would be replenished by the savings resulting from the energy improvements.”