

**To: Climate Change Sub-Committee**

**On: 9 February 2022**

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**Report by: Head of Policy and Commissioning**

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**Heading: Climate Emergency Work Programme – Progress Update**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 17 November 2021, the Climate Change Sub-Committee considered a paper outlining progress on the work being undertaken by the organisation to respond to the climate emergency declared by Council in June 2019.
- 1.2 The Sub-Committee agreed a number of key priorities to be progressed by officers, recognising that it was a particular priority to continue to develop Renfrewshire's plan for achieving the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and to do so alongside a programme of engagement with citizens, community planning partners and businesses.
- 1.3 This paper provides an update on the work undertaken to progress these priority actions and highlights some of the key activities that have been undertaken since the last update to Board. Section 5 of the report also outlines key areas officers propose to focus on over the coming quarter, particularly around the further development and phasing of Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Climate Change Sub-Committee:

- Note the progress achieved in relation to the current work programme as outlined in section 4 of the report;
- Agree the key priorities for progression over the course of the next quarter, as set out in section 5 of the report, noting the timeline for this programme.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 As elected members will be aware, following the Council's declaration of the climate emergency in 2019, officers have been working very closely with partners to develop a programme of work which will drive the collective response to climate change in Renfrewshire. The work programme was paused in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however work recommenced on this in Autumn 2020. The core focus of the local programme of work has been to develop a plan which sets out how the Council will work with partners, communities and stakeholders to achieve the net zero carbon emissions target by 2030, which was set by Renfrewshire Council.
- 3.2 As previously agreed, at the core of the Council's approach is to meaningfully engage with partners, stakeholders and citizens throughout the development of Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero and our engagement activities are outlined in more detail in section 4 of this report.
- 3.3 As previously outlined to the Sub-Committee, there is significant learning and research that also needs to take place to support the organisation and partners to make the extensive changes that will be required to achieve the net zero emissions target by 2030. £1m of funding was previously allocated by Council to establish a Climate Change Action Fund within the organisation, with a view to this being used to support services to tests new approaches or technology and undertake work that could allow the Council to potentially lever in external funding to take forward its climate response at greater pace and scale.
- 3.4 A separate paper has been prepared for this Sub-Committee to provide a progress update for the projects that were allocated funding. Many of these projects involve feasibility studies on projects which could potentially be identified and scaled up as interventions which would help Renfrewshire to meet the 2030 target. The learning and experience from these projects will help to feed into the next phase of Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero as outlined in section 4.
- 3.5 More broadly, the work programme agreed by the Sub-Committee has continued to be progressed by officers in line with the priorities agreed in April 2021. Section 4 below provides a full update on the key actions that have been progressed between November 2021 and February 2022.

#### **4. Update on work programme**

##### **Renfrewshire Climate Panel and Representative Groups**

- 4.1 In order to ensure Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero is accessible, relevant and meaningful for citizens, the Sub-Committee agreed that a small-scale, informal 'citizen's panel' should be developed, recruited through the climate survey carried out in September 2021 which was circulated to the Public Services Panel and also publicised more widely and open to any Renfrewshire citizen.
- 4.2 Renfrewshire Climate Panel has been established, and sessions have successfully taken place in November, December and January with further sessions planned for February. The panel offers the opportunity for both daytime and evening sessions in order to meet the needs of as many people as possible. The sessions were, and will continue to be, held remotely via teams due to the pandemic.
- 4.3 The first session focused on introducing the Panel and the reasons for establishing it; outlining the background to the global climate emergency; and explaining why Renfrewshire declared a climate emergency and what this means. The session in December explored in more details the findings from the climate survey. In discussions over these two sessions, the panel members had requested a focus on particular areas – the January session focused on waste and recycling and it is planned that at the February session there will be a focus on active travel, biodiversity and tree planting.
- 4.4 Whilst efforts have been taken to ensure the panel is as representative as possible, officers remain committed that, as part of our engagement programme, that specific outreach takes place in early 2022 with particular representative organisations to ensure that priority areas, challenges and barriers are taken into consideration with the voice and views of a wide range of people with different needs and experiences.
- 4.5 Youth Services have developed an extensive programme of work with young people focusing on the climate emergency including delivering an "Outdoor Academy" in response to COVID-19, and a focus on outdoor learning and raising awareness of nature and the environment as a focus on building back education recovery and investing in positive mental health and wellbeing. The team also delivered a range of events and legacy projects as part of the Scottish Government's COP26 Youth Climate Programme. A key component of this is supporting Renfrewshire's COP26 Local Ambassadors through a programme of training and engagement. Officers from the Chief Executive's Service were invited to attend a Renfrewshire COP26 Local Ambassador's

meeting in January 2022 and the young people who are Renfrewshire's Local Ambassadors also attended Renfrewshire's Climate Panel. It is also hoped that Renfrewshire Youth Assembly will include climate change on the agenda and action plan for 2022.

- 4.6 Officers have also met with Engage Renfrewshire and Council colleagues leading on Renfrewshire's Social Renewal Plan to discuss further engagement with particular groups on areas of overlap such as climate justice, food and fuel insecurity.

#### **Wider engagement activity**

- 4.7 There was a particular focus of activity in November and December 2021 to tie in with COP26, this included officers holding a climate session with Council employees through the RENTalks series. This was well-received, engagement was very positive and work is underway to consider how to develop ongoing climate engagement with interested employees.
- 4.8 Also within the organisation, officers gave a climate presentation to the Leaders Forum – the forum of senior managers across the Council, which was attended by around 100 officers. At this session, a call to arms was made, seeking support to work together to help make Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero a success by working together across all service areas, Renfrewshire's Health and Social Care Partnership and Renfrewshire Leisure.
- 4.9 Officers were also invited to attend the Johnstone and Linwood Local Partnership to give a presentation on Renfrewshire's work on the climate emergency, which was also well-received and prompted interesting and engaging discussions.
- 4.10 Renfrewshire's Net Zero Network met in late January 2022, the previous session in late 2021 having been rescheduled due to the emergence of the omicron variant and the pressures experienced by partners. The session focused on the findings of the climate survey and updates from all partners on their own planning for net zero. A further session is scheduled to share the high-level findings from the baseline evidence report in Spring and identify shared areas of focus (see paragraph 4.15).
- 4.11 The work to distribute the Business Survey was also paused due to the emergence of the omicron variant and the pressures experienced by the business community in the lead up to Christmas with changing restrictions. The survey question set has already been developed by officers and the work scoped and agreed by the Council's consultant partner to carry out the survey. It is proposed to launch the survey in Spring 2022 and findings will therefore be available to inform phase 2 of Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero.

## **Community Climate Fund Grant Scheme**

- 4.12 Following agreement at the Climate Change Sub-Committee and Leadership Board in November 2021, officers have been progressing the roll out of the Community Climate Fund. At November's meeting, it was agreed that the Community Climate Fund would provide awards of up to £3,000 to community organisations to develop localised, green community projects and initiatives which are tailored to the needs of individual communities. It was agreed that funding of £50,000 be allocated from the Climate Change Action Fund to support this activity.
- 4.13 The fund was launched on 31 January 2022 and is open for applications until 14 March 2022. It is proposed that this first round of award recommendations be submitted a future meeting of the Climate Change Sub-Committee prior to submission at Leadership Board. Award recommendations would follow consideration by a panel comprising of service representatives and a community representative.
- 4.14 Following the approval of awards, officers will work with all successful applicants to monitor the outcomes delivered by projects and initiatives supported through the Fund, as part of a wider evaluation of the local response to the climate emergency in Renfrewshire.

## **Plan for Net Zero**

- 4.15 In June 2021, the Climate Change Sub-Committee approved the commissioning of technical support to establish a robust carbon evidence base to underpin Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero and to identify exemplar options and ideas for further initiatives and interventions that could help Renfrewshire meet the ambitious 2030 net zero target. As reported to this Sub-Committee a procurement exercise in relation to this commission in late summer 2021 was unsuccessful. Procurement colleagues received feedback which highlighted a lack of capacity to deliver the full scope within the outlined timescales due to other ongoing commissions. Officers have since revisited elements of this commission, reviewed other approaches used elsewhere and the work is now being commissioned on a phased basis.
- 4.16 The first phase of the technical support focuses on the baseline evidence for Renfrewshire as a geographical area and Renfrewshire Council as an organisation. Relevant organisations were invited to quote for this work in early January, a supplier has been identified and officers are finalising the scope with them.
- 4.17 Following this first phase, more detailed feasibility work will be commissioned to map the interventions needed to meet the 2030 target and form a more detailed route map to net zero for Renfrewshire. This provides the solid basis

for targeted action plans, ensuring that Renfrewshire Council and partners are focused on the key areas to make the biggest difference and can evidence projections and options for budget decisions and funding applications across all partners.

- 4.18 This support is fundamental to being able to produce a meaningful and action-focused plan for Renfrewshire and, as agreed at the previous meeting of the Sub-Committee, officers have reviewed the broader timeline and tasks required to produce Renfrewshire’s Plan for Net Zero.
- 4.19 Whilst work is underway on the baseline evidence, officers are collating the views from the climate survey, the priorities of Renfrewshire’s Climate Panel and from the other engagement activities as outlined above and are undertaking a desktop mapping exercise, engaging with services and partners on current gaps and opportunities which have been identified across a number of themes.
- 4.20 A summary position on the first phase of the development of Renfrewshire’s Plan for Net Zero will be provided at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee

## 5. Key priority areas

- 5.1 Looking ahead to the quarter, key priority areas for the climate emergency work programme are as follows:

Review the commissioned work on baseline carbon emissions and share findings with Elected Members, partners and citizens, as outlined in section 4	March to June 2022
Continue to progress the development of phase 1 of Renfrewshire’s Plan for Net Zero, with summary position reported to next meeting of Sub-Committee	For next Sub-Committee meeting
Develop approach for phase 2 of Renfrewshire’s Plan for Net Zero and prepare tender for technical support for scope interventions and impact	May/June
Review submissions and agree awards for Community Climate Fund as noted in section 4	May/June
Carry out business survey	Spring 2022
Engagement with underrepresented groups	Ongoing throughout January to May 2022

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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – this report includes updates and further proposals to support engagement and collaboration with local businesses, partners and communities on the climate emergency agenda.
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** - none
6. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality and Human Rights** - 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. As outlined in section 4, officers are seeking to engage with equality or underrepresented groups through the wider engagement programme to ensure all voices and views are heard.
8. **Health and Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** – the Council's procurement team continue to provide support to the programme, including on the specific issue outlined in section 4
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** – none
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none
13. **Climate Risk** – this report outlines work being undertaken by the Council to respond to the climate emergency.

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### List of Background Papers:

Climate Emergency Work Programme: Progress Update, 1 September 2021 and 17 November 2021  
Climate Change Sub-Committee

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Chief Executive's Service