

To: Leadership Board

On: 16 September 2020

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Climate Emergency – arrangements for establishment of Climate Change Sub-Committee

1. Summary

- 1.1 Prior to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, a report was approved by full Council on the 27th of February 2020, outlining the activities and recommendations of the Climate Emergency Working Group (CEWG) to respond to the climate emergency in Renfrewshire.
- 1.2 Due to the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic and the requirement of officers to focus on the immediate response in the community, it was not possible to progress this work at the pace originally intended. Given the current position of service delivery across the Council, this work programme has now resumed, and the climate change agenda will be continued to be prioritised as the organisation moves into the next phase of the pandemic response.
- 1.3 Specifically, this paper seeks to progress the recommendation agreed by Council on 27th February 2020, that a sub-committee of the Leadership Board should be established, in order to ensure the continued oversight of the climate change response by elected members. This paper sets out proposed arrangements for the establishment of this sub-committee for approval by members of the Leadership Board.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Leadership Board:
- agree the proposed terms of reference, meeting and membership arrangements for a Climate Change sub-committee; and
 - note that regular progress updates on the climate change response will continue to be reported to the Leadership Board.

3. Background

- 3.1 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, cannot be tackled in isolation and require full collaboration and support by organisations across all of society.
- 3.2 A report was submitted to Council on 27th February 2020 which provided an update to elected members on the activities undertaken to date across the organisation in relation to climate change, with specific focus on the activities of the cross-party working group which had been established to make recommendations to Council on the actions that must be taken to respond to the climate emergency in Renfrewshire.
- 3.3 The shared ethos behind the work of the Climate Emergency Working Group (CEWG) was that there must be a Council and Renfrewshire wide focus on moving beyond target setting into action and that the Council would act as a local leader, progressing action within this organisation and encouraging engagement across other sectors and communities to create the collective effort needed to meet the challenges of this emergency.
- 3.4 The CEWG recognised the range of activities already undertaken by Renfrewshire Council and made recommendations to develop this programme of work and proposed actions to be taken to both reduce and offset carbon emissions, with a primary focus on the reduction of carbon emissions.
- 3.5 Early priorities agreed by the Council include:
- establishing a sub-committee of the Leadership Board to provide governance to the workstream.
 - developing an adaptation plan for Renfrewshire Council.
 - mainstreaming climate emergency within the Council and aligning staffing resource to support this.
 - engaging with communities, key partners and businesses and;
 - identifying potential funding and other opportunities.
- 3.6 A further meeting of the Climate Emergency Working Group had been scheduled in March 2020 to discuss arrangements for the establishment of the Climate Change sub-committee, however this was cancelled due to the emerging pandemic.

- 3.7 Recognising the requirement to move forward with the actions agreed by Council, proposals for the establishment of the Climate Change sub-committee have been developed in the intervening period, and are presented for consideration by members of the Leadership Board. Subject to board approval, this will allow the sub-committee to be established and begin meeting, and for the broader work to support the climate emergency to move forward within that governance structure.
- 3.8 Tackling the climate emergency remains a key priority for the Council. The impact of COVID-19 has meant that officers have been focused on the emergency humanitarian response to ensure local residents have been safe and supported, however as we move through this next phase of recovery it is anticipated that relevant officers will be able to resume activity corporately on the climate emergency response.

4. Leadership Board sub-committee

- 4.1 As agreed at the Council meeting in February 2020, a sub-committee of the Leadership Board is to be established to maintain oversight of the progress being made by the Council in achieving its target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. A specific element of this work will be to consider and contribute to the development of a climate change adaptation plan for Renfrewshire. A draft terms of reference is appended to this report for consideration by members.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the Climate Change sub-committee will be chaired by a member of the administration group, with 7 members in total (4 members from the administration group, and 3 members from opposition groups as nominated by group leaders). The membership of the Climate Change Sub - Committee will be drawn primarily from the membership of the Leadership Board but with discretion available to groups to appoint members who are not on the Board but who have a particular interest in the remit of the sub-committee. It is proposed that the role of vice chair will be held by an opposition member from the sub committee.
- 4.3 All nominations for the sub committee should be submitted to the Head of Corporate Governance by close of business on Friday 2nd October 2020. The sub committee may wish to extend membership in an advisory capacity to include for example representation from external groups or organisations, with the process set out for this in Appendix 1. Additional members would not hold voting rights.
- 4.4 The first meeting of the Climate Change sub committee will take place in late October, and it is proposed that meetings are scheduled to take place following each main meeting of the Leadership Board, which would allow for 5 meetings per year to be held.
- 4.5 Regular reports on climate change and all relevant matters for decision, will continue to be reported to the Leadership Board for approval.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - the Council's response to the Climate Change agenda may impact the Council's cost of service delivery and may require a shift in the focus of investment. There may be potential to lever in external funding to support the agenda from national funds.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – the local response to the climate change agenda will require a significant change in behaviours and activity, with a key focus on engaging with communities, partners and businesses to make the required level of change happen.
4. **Legal** - The report concerns a change to the governance arrangements of the Council by the creation of a sub-committee of the Leadership Board
5. **Property/Assets** - the Council has been active in terms of its Carbon Management Plan and the focus on energy efficiency of public buildings. This will be a continued area of focus for the Council going forward.
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.
8. **Health and Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** – the Council may be required to review its purchasing decisions to ensure these support the carbon neutral target and to drive its sustainable procurement duty.
10. **Risk** - none
11. **Privacy Impact** - none
12. **COSLA Policy Position** - none
13. **Climate Risk** – as per the content of this report.

List of Background Papers

- (a) Report to Council 27th of February 2020 'Climate Change Emergency'
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Appendix 1

Draft terms of reference –Climate Change Sub Committee

1. Remit:

To consider matters relating to Climate Change and the Council's response to the Climate Emergency including its progress towards achieving the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030, the development of an adaptation plan for the Council in order to achieve this target, and to make recommendations to the Council and the Leadership Board regarding those matters.

2. Chair and membership:

The sub-committee will be drawn from members of the Leadership Board. It will be chaired by the Leader of the Council, with the vice chair position to be filled by an elected member from the opposition groups.

Membership will comprise:

4 members of the administration

3 members of the opposition.

The membership of the Climate Change Sub -Committee will be drawn primarily from the membership of the Leadership Board but with the discretion available to groups to appoint members who are not on the Board but who have a particular interest in the remit of the sub-committee. It is proposed that the role of vice chair will be held by an opposition member from the sub committee.

The sub committee may wish to appoint additional members to its core membership, for example external representatives from relevant groups and organisations. Additional members would be invited to join the subcommittee in an advisory capacity, subject to agreement of the majority of sub committee members. Additional members would not hold voting rights.

3. Frequency of meetings:

The Group will meet approximately 5 times per year in line with the Leadership Board cycle and regular updates will be reported to the Leadership Board. Special meetings of the sub committee may be called as agreed by the sub committee.