

To: Leadership Board

On: 15 September 2021

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Climate Change Update

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Climate Change Sub-Committee of the Leadership Board was established in October 2020 to provide oversight and scrutiny of the Council's activities on climate change, and specifically its progress in terms of meeting the target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- 1.2 The sub-committee met most recently on 1 September 2021 and considered:
- Progress updates in relation to the overall Climate Emergency work programme;
 - The timetable for the development of Renfrewshire's plan to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030, as agreed by Council in June 2019;
 - An update in relation to those projects being progressed by services, which have received funding from the £1m Climate Change Action Funding allocated by Council in March 2020 and;
 - Two further project proposals in relation to this fund, which have been developed by services in relation to energy modelling within the school estate and support for businesses.
- 1.3 This paper provides an update on the work programme considered and agreed by the sub-committee, and specifically highlights work being undertaken to develop Renfrewshire's first net zero plan. The plan will set out the key actions that will need to be undertaken by the Council and its partners to achieve the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030 agreed by Council.
- 1.4 Information is also provided within this paper on the two funding proposals endorsed by the Climate Change Sub-Committee at its meeting on 1 September for consideration by the Leadership Board. Funding of £115,000 is sought to support these initiatives from the Climate Change Action Fund.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Leadership Board:
- Note the progress update provided in terms of the local work programme in relation to the climate emergency response; and
 - Agree the funding proposals detailed at Appendix 1 of this report, with £115,000 to be allocated from the Climate Change Action Fund to support those initiatives outlined.
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3. Background

- 3.1 On 16 September 2020, members of the Leadership Board agreed that a sub-committee of the board would be established to maintain oversight of the progress being made by the Council in achieving its target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. It was agreed that a key role for the sub-committee would be to consider and contribute to the development of a climate change plan for Renfrewshire. A work programme to guide the local response and the development of this plan has been agreed and overseen by the sub-committee.
- 3.2 In addition the sub-committee has also considered a range of funding proposals developed by services, that have subsequently been supported through the Climate Change Action Fund.
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4. Work Programme

- 4.1 At the Climate Change sub-committee meeting on 19 April 2021, an indicative work programme for 2021 agreed by the sub-committee, with a key focus on progressing Renfrewshire's plan for achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The programme was presented as being indicative at that time, due to the ongoing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact that this may have on planned activities.
- 4.2 Good progress has been made in terms of progressing the key actions agreed within the work programme including:
- First 10 projects underway funded through the Climate Change Action Fund which will support work around feasibility of new energy sources, active travel options, peatland restoration and net zero housing in Renfrewshire and a range of other priorities.
 - Commissioning underway to secure external support to develop a robust evidence base around Renfrewshire's carbon emissions and to identify actions that will help the Council and its partners to achieve the target of net zero carbon emissions in Renfrewshire by 2030.
 - Appointment of a lead officer to oversee and co-ordinate the local programme of work in response to the climate emergency.
 - Survey of local residents now underway to assess local attitudes and knowledge around climate change.

- Recruitment underway for Renfrewshire Climate Panel, with residents being asked to support the Council in developing Renfrewshire's plan for net zero.
- Business survey being developed with Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce in order to gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges for local businesses in relation to climate change.

4.3 The activities above will support the development of Renfrewshire's plan for achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. In previous papers to elected members this has been referred to as an adaptation plan, however through engagement with local and national partners it is evident that there is a need to make the purpose and focus of this plan much clearer for all stakeholders, therefore going forward it is proposed that this is referred to a Renfrewshire's net-zero plan.

Carbon emissions – this means the carbon (or its equivalent) being released into the Earth's atmosphere. A major cause of emissions is burning fossil fuels (such as coal, gas or oil) for heating or transport.

Net zero – this is when carbon emissions are reduced as low as they can be and any remaining carbon that can't be avoided is 'offset' by methods such as planting trees for example, to bring the overall amount of carbon used to zero (or less).

4.4 The net-zero plan will set out the key actions the Council and partners will need to take to achieve net zero carbon emissions, and this will be supported by an adaption plan/strategy document which set out in much more specific detail the mitigations that the Council and partners will need to deploy to respond to and build resilience against the impact of the climate change.

4.5 Key priorities during the next 3 months have been agreed by the sub-committee as follows:

- Completion of public and business climate surveys
- Establishment of Community Climate Panel
- Appointment of supplier to support detailed assessment of carbon emissions in Renfrewshire and net zero plan development.
- Development of further Climate Change Action fund proposals, including the potential development of a community climate fund, as agreed at the last meeting of the climate sub-committee.

5. Climate Change Action Fund proposals

5.1 In the budget approved by Council on 9 March 2020, £1 million was allocated to establish a Climate Change Action Fund. The Climate Change Action Fund is intended to fund innovative projects and initiatives being developed by Council services in response to the climate emergency, provide initial funding to pilot new ideas and approaches, to support engagement and partnership working across Renfrewshire, or to accelerate the pace of change already being delivered through existing initiatives.

This process is vital to the Council being able to lever in the external funding that will be required to support climate change initiatives at the scale and pace required. To date, £768,000 funding has been allocated to support 10 projects through the Climate Change Action Fund.

- 5.2 Two further proposals have been developed by services in relation to the Climate Change Action Fund, with a total of £115,000 of funding being requested this cycle. Further detail on these proposals is outlined within Appendix 1 of this report, and these would seek to deliver:
- The introduction of a business support scheme which would provide small grants to local businesses to support the transition to green energy sources and processes.
 - An energy modelling project in Bridge of Weir Primary, the findings from which could be used to inform the refurbishment of other similar primary buildings.
- 5.3 These proposals have been endorsed by the Climate Change Sub-Committee and are now being submitted to the Leadership Board for formal approval. If approved, £117,000 would remain within the Climate Change Action Fund for future allocation.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – This paper outlines proposals to allocate £115,000 of the total £1m funding allocated by the Council in March 2020 to support the response to the climate emergency. £0.768m of this funding has been allocated to date.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – this report highlights proposals to develop citizen and partnership forums to support engagement and collaboration with local businesses, partners and communities on the climate change 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.
8. **Health and Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** – none

10. **Risk** – none
 11. **Privacy Impact** – none
 12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none
 13. **Climate Risk** – this report provides a summary of work being undertaken by the Council to respond to the climate emergency.
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Appendix 1 – Climate Change Action Fund - Funding Proposals

Name / Description	Funding required	Summary
Net Zero Business Grant Support – Renfrewshire Council Grant programme for local businesses	£100,000	<p>This proposal aims to encourage local businesses to embrace net zero ambitions and to support Renfrewshire’s goal of net zero emissions by 2030.</p> <p>With one in three small businesses worried about rising energy prices, including more than half of SMEs in hospitality and leisure, this proposal ensures business get the support they need to cut emissions and their bills at the same time.</p> <p>50% grant support (up to £10k per grant) will be offered to support local businesses to make changes to business premises and operations. For example, a move to low carbon heating systems, solar powered energy and other measures to reduce emissions.</p> <p>The grants will be delivered through the Economic Development Team in line with other similar business grant funds.</p>
Energy modelling Bridge of Weir PS	£15,000	<p>Proposal to undertake detailed energy modelling of Bridge of Weir Primary School to facilitate design and development of enhanced and integrated energy efficient ‘Enerphit’ refurbishment options.</p> <p>Bridge of Weir PS is an archetype of a number of Primary Schools in the portfolio and the modelling exercise/data will inform potential options for other properties across the school estate.</p>