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To:           **Planning and Climate Change Policy Board**

On:           **23 August 2022**

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Report by: **Chief Executive**

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Heading:   **Plan for Net Zero**

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## **1.     Summary**

- 1.1     The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 committed Scotland to become net zero by 2045, with the Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting Duties placing a legal requirement on public bodies to set target dates for zero direct emissions and indirect emission reductions; report on how spending and resource will contribute to these targets; and report on the body's contribution to Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Programme.
- 1.2     Renfrewshire Council has shown leadership at both a strategic level and operational level to be a driver of change - declaring a climate emergency in June 2019 and committing to working towards net zero by 2030. This target is for both the Renfrewshire area as a whole and Renfrewshire Council as an organisation.
- 1.3     Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero is Council-led but is for the whole of Renfrewshire. The Plan outlines 5 themes, with key outcomes to be achieved against each theme. The core principle at the heart of the Plan, is for the Council to act as a driver or catalyst for change, to lead by example and maximise the opportunities of a transition to net zero - integrating climate action into the Council's financial planning, decision making and existing activities and embedding climate considerations across all that we do in a way that ensures continued delivery of high quality public services and closely aligns with our ambitions for Renfrewshire.
- 1.4     **In terms of achieving net zero ambitions, it must be recognised that the scale of the challenge for Renfrewshire as an area and the Council as an organisation is significant.** Many of the levers required to meet this challenge head on will need to be activated by government, possibly through legislation. Substantial investment at a local and national level will also be required alongside the

successful rollout of enabling activities within national programmes such as transport infrastructure, and the ability to source specialist expertise and skills.

- 1.5 This paper outlines the key elements of the Plan for Net Zero, including activities undertaken to date; next steps; and planned and proposed actions for the next phase, with the Quick Read Plan for Net Zero and the full Plan for Net Zero appended to the paper for Elected Members' comment and approval.
- 1.6 Notwithstanding the challenges outlined above, the Plan for Net Zero is ambitious - developed with local people and organisations, and built upon a strong evidence base. The next phase of the plan and associated programme of work will focus on delivery – accelerating the work that is already in progress and ensuring that net zero carbon ambitions are a core part of everything that we and partners do in Renfrewshire.
- 1.7 Ongoing engagement with all stakeholders will be integral to the approach taken in delivering on this plan, with a strong focus on equality and fairness, and in ensuring that every citizen is able to participate in the net zero journey as we move forward. In recognition of this, Council officers will work with Renfrewshire's Climate Panel to develop an easy read version of the Plan for Net Zero, to reflect the different levels of understanding across stakeholders on this journey.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Planning and Climate Change Policy Board:
  - approve Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero for publication as appended to this report; and
  - note that regular updates will be provided to the board on the further development of the plan and its ongoing implementation.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 committed Scotland to net zero by 2045, with the Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting Duties placing a legal requirement on public bodies to set target dates for zero direct emissions and indirect emission reductions; report on how spending and resource will contribute to these targets; and report on the body's contribution to Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Programme.
- 3.2 Renfrewshire Council has shown leadership at both a strategic level and operational level to be a driver of change - declaring a climate emergency in June 2019 and committing to working towards net zero in Renfrewshire by 2030. Strong governance has been developed to lead by example and take action to tackle climate change, including establishing a Climate Change Sub-Committee, now the Planning and Climate Change Policy Board, and committing £1million to a Climate Change Action Fund. The fund has supported innovative climate projects and initiatives across Renfrewshire which build on transformative projects that the Council has already delivered across our operations. A core focus of the local programme of work, has been the development of Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero.

### **A Plan for All**

- 3.3 Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero is Council-led but is for the whole Renfrewshire area. Moving towards net zero will transform our communities, our economy and how we deliver our services, therefore engagement is key to ensure all voices are heard. A key element of the development of the Net Zero Plan has been our grassroots approach – in developing this Plan, officers gathered different views and ideas across all our stakeholders to identify and prioritise key areas for action and ensure everyone can participate in the design and delivery of our transition to net zero. The Plan for Net Zero is not a 'one size fits all', and ongoing engagement will help to shape the delivery phase of the Plan, using local knowledge and voices to ensure solutions are tailored to address different needs across different areas and that no one and no place is left behind.
- 3.4 To ensure that all voices are heard in the design and delivery of the Plan for Net Zero, Renfrewshire's Climate Panel was formed. It is made up of a representative sample of Renfrewshire citizens, to look at climate issues, discuss how this affects people locally and help identify what interventions are needed and what actions can be taken to collectively support Renfrewshire's drive towards net zero by 2030. The Panel is also attended by members of Renfrewshire's COP26 Local Ambassadors (formed as part of the Scottish Government's COP26 Youth Climate Programme). To ensure that every citizen is able to participate in the net zero journey Council officers will work with Renfrewshire's Climate Panel to develop an easy read version of the Plan for Net Zero, as well as a child-friendly version, to reflect the different levels of understanding across stakeholders on this journey.
- 3.5 Carrying out extensive engagement prior to developing the Plan for Net Zero is a different approach to the one which many other local authorities have taken. This approach was adopted, as initial research indicated that the Council itself was likely to be responsible for only a small percentage of Renfrewshire's overall emissions. It was recognised therefore we need to ensure that local businesses, organisations and citizens were engaged in the journey to net zero, and were able to feel connected to the Plan and the fundamental requirement for collective action.
- 3.6 Collaboration and partnership working across all stakeholders will also ensure that we maximise the opportunities that arise over time from our transition to net zero, ensuring benefits are shared equitably to create a greener, fairer, sustainable way of life for all our citizens, communities and local businesses.

### **Evidence base**

- 3.7 In addition to ensuring that a collective plan was produced through engagement and collaboration, it was felt that it was also important for any plan that was produced to be able to develop the foundations upon which we can work towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Key to this was the development of a local carbon emissions baseline, which would allow all stakeholders to understand the scale of the ambition, to identify targeted actions which could reduce emissions, and also allow our progress towards net zero emissions to be monitored and reported.
- 3.8 Officers worked with external technical consultants to baseline emissions for Renfrewshire Council as an organisation as well as the Renfrewshire area as a

whole. This showed where we had started from (using 2014/15 as our baseline); where we are now; and a best case and worst case trajectory of our emissions to 2030 for both the Council and the area as a whole.

- 3.9 The baselining work showed that Renfrewshire Council makes up around 2.5% of the area's total emissions. Renfrewshire Council emissions are dominated by buildings that we are responsible for (67%). The most significant emissions source is school buildings (47%) which are the largest element of our estate. This Council emissions data did not include facilities managed by OneRen (such as leisure facilities, museums and libraries) but this is currently being established and the data for the buildings managed by OneRen will be included in annual emissions monitoring. Transport is the second highest source of Council emissions at 17%. For the Renfrewshire area, transport is the highest source of emissions at 34%, followed by both residential energy use and commercial and industrial energy use, at 29%.
- 3.10 This evidence base has enabled us to identify and prioritise key sectors and actions in order to reach net zero and will be a valuable engagement tool with stakeholders to stimulate action and encourage partnership working and collaboration. The baselining work also produced a modelling tool that can be updated to report progress to net zero – so this work is not just a snapshot in time, but a live monitoring tool that can be updated as projects are proposed; national targets and policies are updated; and/or data sets are improved and updated.
- 3.11 Although the Council makes up a small percentage of the area's emissions, as a local authority we can influence emissions in areas including planning, buildings, housing, education, energy, transport and waste. It is estimated that local authorities can influence around 33% of an area's emissions through sectors that are directly shaped by local authority practice, policy or partnerships.

### **The Roadmap to Net Zero**

- 3.12 The first phase of the Plan for Net Zero outlines an approach for the Council to lead by example and maximise the opportunities of a transition to net zero - integrating climate action into all that we do in a way that ensures continued delivery of high quality public services and closely aligns with our ambitions for Renfrewshire.
- 3.13 Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero will be delivered through 5 focus areas with key outcomes for each, which have been identified and shaped by our stakeholder engagement:
- **Clean Energy:** we will minimise energy demand, maximise energy efficiency and transform our energy systems to deliver clean, affordable energy for all
  - **Sustainable Transport:** we will maximise sustainable transport opportunities to deliver an inclusive, affordable transport system that provides choice for all
  - **Circular Economy:** we will make Renfrewshire a circular economy society: minimising waste and maximising reuse, recycling and recovery of resources rather than treating them as waste
  - **Connected Communities:** we will empower our communities by ensuring an inclusive and just transition to net zero with social justice and health and wellbeing at its core for current and future generations

- **Resilient Place:** we will optimise biodiversity and nature locally to enhance our natural environment and maximise green economic opportunities while planning and preparing for impacts of climate change
- 3.14 The attached Plan for Net Zero builds on these focus areas and outlines a vision and strategic direction in response to the climate emergency for Renfrewshire:
- ‘We want to end Renfrewshire’s contribution to climate change within a generation. We are committed to working towards net zero by 2030 for the whole of Renfrewshire to ensure a safer, healthier, greener and fairer place for everyone to live, work and spend time in.’
- 3.15 The Plan describes the context for our strategic direction in Renfrewshire, and the importance of working together across the Council and beyond, to ensure projects, programmes and approaches complement each other, make the best use of expertise and experience, and maximise resources while closely aligning with our Council and Community Plans, and national and local policies and strategies.

## 4. Next steps

- 4.1 The change needed to reach net zero is unprecedented. Many of the levers to make the structural change required, such as legislation, will need to come from national government. Substantial investment at a local and national level is required alongside the successful rollout of enabling activities within national programmes such as transport infrastructure, and the ability to source specialist expertise and skills. It will require long-term financial resources, upskilling and reskilling of local workforce, exploring new business models and large-scale investment to support the scale and pace of change required and align investment with climate priorities.
- 4.2 In recognition of this, the next phase of the Plan for Net Zero is centred on delivery. The delivery stage will see action being scaled up and accelerated – identifying and initiating new ways of working; completing smaller exemplar projects and using lessons learned to scale up and replicate; exploring new technologies and innovative delivery methods; identifying opportunities for partnership delivery; and progressing longer term projects such as tree planting and peat bog restoration.
- 4.3 This will require the organisation to consider opportunities to fund or to access funding to deliver projects which deliver Net Zero ambitions, and to maximise opportunities for carbon reduction through existing programmes of work.
- 4.4 Looking ahead to Phase 2 of the Plan for Net Zero, the next steps are as follows:

Step	Indicative date
<b>Child Friendly Plan for Net Zero:</b> developing an update report specifically aimed for children and young people, given the importance of this agenda for them and to ensure inclusivity of our approach.	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2022
<b>Easy Read Plan for Net Zero:</b> developing an easy read version of the Plan for Net Zero, working with	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2022

Renfrewshire's Climate Panel, to ensure every citizen can participate in the design and delivery of the Plan.	
<b>Detailed Phased Road Map to 2030:</b> looking strategically and holistically across the whole Renfrewshire area to identify opportunities and solutions and to set phased targets to net zero, which will be highlighted in the form of a road map with to aid communication with stakeholders.	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023
<b>Quantified Delivery Plans: linked to the above,</b> setting out costed, phased area based delivery plans with benchmark capital costs for each period of the Net Zero road map; and quantifying and considering all impacts of the proposed delivery plans, including those that cannot be monetised (e.g. carbon reduction, fuel poverty alleviation, job opportunities).	Costed delivery plans will be prioritised and phased for completion between 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023 and 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2023
<b>Developing a carbon budget for Renfrewshire Council:</b> identifying emissions by service area to improve understanding of how Council emissions relate to the services we provide and the reductions needed in order to adapt to delivering high quality local services in a way that is fit for a resilient, net zero future.	6 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
<b>Developing an Adaptation Plan for Renfrewshire:</b> developing adaptation solutions and implementing a phased programme of priority actions which are designed to respond to and address the local impacts of climate change that are already happening, as well as prepare for future climate risks across the Renfrewshire area. These actions will be centred around communities, security and resilience, infrastructure and our local environment.	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2023
<b>Verifying, adopting and updating our emissions modelling tool:</b> quantifying the impact of the phased actions, to inform future targets and present data in an interactive way for stakeholders.	Annual updates from 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2023 as projects and new technologies are implemented

## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – delivering the Plan for Net Zero will have resource implications for the Council and includes a commitment to working collaboratively to ensure best value for our approach. The full extent of the resource implications will be established during Phase 2 of the Plan.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – the Plan for Net Zero links closely with our OD and workforce planning to ensure our people have the skills and tools required to do their job in the best possible way.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – the Plan for Net Zero includes updates and further proposals to support engagement and collaboration with local businesses, partners and communities on the climate emergency agenda and highlights the continued activities which support the key priorities set out in the Council and Community Plans to tackle inequality and widen opportunity.
4. **Legal** - the Plan for Net Zero has no significant legal implications, however future actions may have some level of implication.

5. **Property/Assets** - the Plan for Net Zero may have significant implications for property and assets given the nature of the work involved.
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. In addition, social justice and reducing inequalities is at the core of the Plan for Net Zero and one of its overarching outcomes.
8. **Health and Safety** – none.
9. **Procurement** – the Plan for Net Zero has significant procurement implications given the nature of the work involved.
10. **Risk** – The climate emergency brings a risk to Council and its communities in relation to increased extreme weather as well as food insecurity. The Plan for Net Zero has a focus on both mitigation and adaptation and has social justice at its core to ensure a just transition so no one is left behind and no one is disadvantaged in the transition to net zero. The Plan for Net Zero has key focus areas outlining actions the Council can take to support and enable those most disadvantaged. A key risk is that the Council is not in control of all of the levers, and cannot deliver everything required in isolation, so there is a risk that others do not contribute to meet the net zero target.
11. **Privacy Impact** – none.
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – this work aligns with COSLA's current work alongside the Scottish Government in response to the climate emergency.
13. **Climate Risk** – this report outlines work being undertaken by the Council to respond to the climate emergency.

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Appendix 1: Quick Read Plan for Net Zero  
Appendix 2: Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero

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**List of Background Papers:**

Climate Emergency Work Programme: Progress Update, 14 June 2022 Planning and Climate Change Policy Board

**Author:** Roz Smith, Climate Emergency Lead Officer  
Chief Executive's Service