

To: Climate Change Sub-Committee

On: 1 September 2021

Report by: Head of Policy and Commissioning

Heading: Climate Emergency Work Programme – Progress Update

1. Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting on 19 April 2021, the 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.
- 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. An updated work programme is provided at Appendix 1 for consideration by the sub-committee, with section 5 of the report setting out a number of key priority actions which have been identified by officers for completion over the next 3 months.

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 and associated updated timetable; and
 - Agree key priorities for progression over the course of the next 3 months as set out in Section 5 of the report.

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 guide our collective response to climate change in Renfrewshire. The work programme was paused in 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 to achieve the net zero carbon emissions target by 2030, which was set by Renfrewshire Council.

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).

- 3.2 Initial research undertaken by the organisation in 2019, estimated that circa 3-4% of all emissions in Renfrewshire related to Council services or activities. In recognition of this, the local work programme agreed by elected members has had a strong focus on engagement with local residents, communities, partners and businesses on the emergency, and the actions which will be collectively required to respond to this.
- 3.3 There is a significant amount of 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 The sub-committee considered a range of initial funding proposals in February and April 2021, and £768,000 of funding has now been allocated from the Climate Change Action Fund to support a number of initiatives. An update report on the Fund is provided as a separate item on this meeting agenda.
- 3.5 The work programme agreed by the sub-committee has continued to be progressed by officers in line with the key priorities agreed in April 2021. Section 4 provides a full update on the key actions that have been progressed between April and September 2021.

4. Update on work programme

- 4.1 At the Climate Change Sub-Committee meeting on 19 April 2021, an indicative work programme for 2021 was provided for members, 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 including the procurement of various projects.
- 4.2 Key immediate priorities agreed by the sub-committee at that time, were as follows:
- Establishment of a Partnership Forum
 - Recruitment of Renfrewshire Climate Panel members (local residents)
 - Finalisation of Business Audit proposal with Chamber of Commerce
 - Development of further Climate Change Action Fund proposals
 - Exploration of potential to engage academic partner to support the Council to develop a detailed carbon baseline which will allow more detailed milestones and targets to be set within the draft adaptation strategy
- 4.3 Very good progress has been made in progressing these priority actions given the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic being experienced by the Council and its partners, and across communities. Specific updates can be provided as follows:

Developing the evidence base

- 4.3.1 As agreed by the Climate Change Sub-Committee, work has been undertaken to consider the external expertise that the Council needs to support local planning and decision making in relation to the climate emergency response. Specifically, support is required to develop a detailed carbon assessment for Renfrewshire and to identify milestones and targets to work towards net zero carbon emissions in Renfrewshire by 2030.
- 4.3.2 Extensive market engagement has been undertaken over the summer, which has allowed officers to develop a greater understanding of the support that could be provided to the Council. This has informed the development of a very detailed specification to guide this piece of work, which is currently out to tender.
- 4.3.3 Due to the additional time taken to research potential options for this work and associated procurement timescales, it is unlikely that this will be completed by the end of this year, which in turn will require timescales for the development of our local net zero plan to be adjusted.

Climate Change - Public Services Panel survey

- 4.3.4 A survey has been issued to all 1500 members of the Renfrewshire Public Services Panel. The main aim of the survey is to engage with local people on their understanding of the climate emergency and to probe some of the ways in which individual and collective behaviours could change to support the local

response. The survey is also available to the wider Renfrewshire population to complete and the results will be collated by an independent firm commissioned to undertake the survey work on behalf of the Council.

- 4.3.5 We intend to use the survey process to recruit the membership of the Renfrewshire Climate Panel, and in addition the survey findings will also shape the agenda for the initial meetings of this Panel.

Renfrewshire Climate Panel

- 4.3.6 As outlined above, members of the Renfrewshire Climate Panel will be recruited through the climate survey which is currently underway. Local residents will be recruited on a representative basis from all survey respondents by the firm commissioned to undertake the climate survey in order to ensure independence in selection. It is anticipated that the first meeting of the Renfrewshire Climate Panel will take place in September/October 2021.

Business Audit / survey

- 4.3.7 The Climate Change Sub-Committee has previously considered the critical role that local businesses will play in terms of responding to the climate emergency. This may be through a change or adaptation to existing business models or practice or could involve the development of new sectors and employment opportunities for local people. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the current landscape in Renfrewshire, a business survey has been developed in partnership with Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce. The survey will be issued jointly by the Council and the Chamber of Commerce in September 2021, and will be co-ordinated by an independent research firm.

Lead Officer

- 4.3.8 Funding was previously allocated through the Climate Change Action Fund to appoint a Climate Emergency Lead Officer to co-ordinate the extensive programme of work currently underway in Renfrewshire, including the development of our local plan to achieve net zero carbon emissions. Following a competitive recruitment process, a lead officer has now been appointed and will commence in this role in September 2021.

Partnership Forum

- 4.3.9 The Partnership Forum met for the first time on 9 June 2021. Comprising initially of a range of key community planning partners, the first meeting served as a scoping session during which partners were able to discuss activities within their own organisations and to explore options to work more closely together to respond to the climate emergency in Renfrewshire. The meeting was very positive and one of the initial options being explored is the possibility of developing this type of forum into a Partnership network which could allow for information and learning to be shared, and ensure a wider group of partners and organisations can be engaged in local discussions.

Wider engagement

4.3.10 A range of stakeholder meetings have taken place in recent months at both a local and national level. The meetings have allowed officers to gain a greater understanding of the local and national policy context and to explore opportunities for collaboration within the Council and with external partners. These have included:

- Scottish Government policy teams
- Improvement Service
- A number of Scottish Local Authorities
- Colleagues leading this agenda at the City Region level
- Engagement sessions with senior leadership teams across all Council services and with Renfrewshire Leisure and Renfrewshire HSCP
- Engagement with Renfrewshire Community Planning Executive Group

4.3.11 A staff network and senior officer group are also being established to support greater collaboration across the organisation on the local response to the climate emergency.

Development of the adaptation / net zero plan for Renfrewshire

4.3.12 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 as Renfrewshire's net zero plan.

4.3.13 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 mitigate and build resilience against the impact of the climate change.

4.3.14 It may be helpful to clarify for members some of the terminology commonly used in relation to this agenda. There are three key areas in relation to climate change plans and strategies that are commonly referred to. These are:

- Mitigation, a climate plan or a plan for net zero – this outlines the types of mitigating activities that organisations, businesses and individuals can take specifically to reduce carbon emissions now and in the future. This type of plan explains how to achieve the targets set and, in Renfrewshire, this will be the overarching plan for our approach.
- Adaptation – this type of plan is concerned with the damage already done to the planet and the impacts felt now and will likely be experienced in the future. Adaptation plans outline how we can adapt our place, ways of working and lives now and in the future to ensure we are resilient. For example, we know that we are likely to experience more extreme weather conditions due to climate change, so an

adaptation plan would include actions to make sure properties can cope with extreme heat or cold etc. Some of these actions will overlap with activities needed to meet carbon emission targets but their focus is on the technical ways to adapt our way of life to cope with a more climate impacted future.

- A third strand is planning in relation to biodiversity and nature. This is very closely linked with the above two areas – we know that climate change is causing loss of nature and that loss of natural habitats and species will also impact on climate change. Some of the solutions and proposed activities to support achieving the 2030 target will be nature-based solutions and Renfrewshire Council is a signatory to the Edinburgh Declaration of Biodiversity, recognising its value and our role in protecting and enhancing it.

5. Revised programme

5.1 As outlined in section 4, very good progress has been made in terms of progressing the local climate emergency programme, however there has been some slippage in terms of establishing some of the projects and engagement mechanisms which will be required to support the development of Renfrewshire's net zero plan. A revised work programme is now attached as Appendix 1 for elected member's consideration.

5.2 Key priorities during the next 3 months have been identified as follows:

- Completion of public and business climate surveys
- Establishment of the Renfrewshire Climate Panel (engagement with residents)
- Appointment of supplier to support carbon budget 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.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none
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 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.
 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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List of Background Papers - none

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Appendix 1 – Revised work programme

	Key activities	Timescale
Stage 1	Desk based analysis and research in relation to national policy, practice and innovation	Ongoing
	Engagement with Council services and partners	Ongoing
	Partnership Forum engagement	Initial meeting held June 2021
	Climate survey	August 2021
	Renfrewshire Climate Forum meetings	September / October 2021
	Business survey	September 2021
Stage 2	Partnership forum engagement on draft	November 2021
	Renfrewshire Climate Forum engagement	November/ December 2021
	Draft net zero plan presented to Climate Change Sub-Committee	End of 2021
Stage 3	Public consultation – 4 weeks	Early 2022
Stage 4	*Final draft considered by Climate Change Sub-Committee	9 February 2022
	*Final approval at Leadership Board	24 February 2022

*subject to consultation timetable being completed in line with restrictions.