

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 22 MAY, 2019

Present: Councillors C Pike (Chair), I Davidson (Vice-Chair), N Baillie, S Dickinson, M Ford, V Harper (as substitute for Councillor R Cassie), A Kloppert, I Taylor and A Wallace.

Apologies: Councillor R Cassie.

Officers: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services; Principal Energy Management Engineer, Infrastructure Services; Team Leader (Sustainability and Climate Change), Infrastructure Services; Senior Committee Officer (Allan Bell), Legal and Governance; Senior Solicitor (Iain Meredith), Legal and Governance; Internal Waste Reduction Officer (Joel Evans), Infrastructure Services; Sustainability and Climate Change Officer (Marnie Thomson), Infrastructure Services; Sustainable Development Officer (Eric Wells), Infrastructure Services; and Sustainability and Climate Change Graduate Intern (Elizabeth Stanyer), Infrastructure Services.

VALEDICTORY

On the occasion of their final meeting before taking up new positions elsewhere, the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Iain Meredith, Marnie Thomson and Elizabeth Stanyer for their service to the Council and, in particular, Eric Wells, who was retiring in June, 2019, after 12 years' service with the Council.

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked members if they had any interests to declare, in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. No interests were declared.

2. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In making decisions on the following items of business, the Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 148 of the Equality Act 2010:-

- (1) to have due regard to the need to:-
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (2) to consider, where an equality impact assessment has been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF 27 FEBRUARY, 2019

On consideration of the circulated Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 27 February, 2019, members **approved** it as a correct record, after which the Minute was signed by the Chair.

4. BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Members noted an oral report by Marnie Thomson, Sustainability and Climate Change Officer, on Behaviour Change at Aberdeenshire Council through the Green Champions, Green Schools and Aberdeenshire Building Change programmes.

Thereafter, the Committee **noted** members' comments on litter picking, seed bombing, measuring carbon reduction activity, and the sharing of expertise on recycling activity by Council establishments within the same settlements.

5. ENERGY EFFICIENT SCOTLAND CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a circulated report dated 26 April, 2019, by the Director of Infrastructure Services (1) which explained that the Scottish Government had undertaken consultation on the delivery of the heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency objectives of the Scottish Energy Efficiency Programme and (2) to which was appended a draft Aberdeenshire Council response, based upon officers' comments.

After detailed consideration, the Committee:-

- (1) **noted** the draft response and **agreed** to add members' comments in respect of the installation costs of energy efficient measures, the need for governmental co-ordination and promotion of green initiatives for domestic properties, the comparative costs of electricity for domestic heating and for powering vehicles, the apparent lack of correlation between Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) ratings and energy usage, the impact on property values of not complying with energy efficiency standards, the challenges specific to remote rural areas, the impact of disposable income levels on energy usage, and LED (Light Emitting Diode) lighting,
- (2) **noted** that members of the Communities Committee would be requested to comment on the draft response at the meeting of that Committee on 6 June, 2019, and
- (3) **agreed** to delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure Services to approve the final response, following consultation with the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and main Opposition Spokespersons of both the Sustainability Committee and the Communities Committee.

6. ENERGY EFFICIENT SCOTLAND – A CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON THE FUTURE OF LOW CARBON HEAT FOR OFF-GAS BUILDINGS

Consideration was given to a circulated report dated 26 April, 2019, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, (1) which explained that the Scottish Government had called for evidence on the technologies and actions required to support the decarbonisation of the heat supply to buildings which do not currently use mains gas as their primary heating fuel and (2) to which was appended a draft response on behalf of the Council, containing comments provided by officers.

After detailed consideration, the Committee:-

- (1) **noted** the draft Council response to the Scottish Government Call for Evidence "Energy Efficient Scotland – the Future of Low Carbon Heat for Off-Gas Buildings", and **agreed** to include members' comments within the response in respect of the limitations of the national grid, the increased cost of biomass pellets, the provision of information to householders on energy efficient measures, back-up boilers, monitoring the optimum use of energy efficient measures in public buildings, freight transport costs, and the dangers of not disincentivising non-sustainable fuel choices,

- (2) **noted** that members of the Communities Committee would be requested to comment on the draft response at the meeting of that Committee on 6 June, 2019, and
- (3) **agreed** to delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure Services to approve the final response, following consultation with the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and main Opposition Spokespersons of both the Sustainability Committee and the Communities Committee.

7. CARBON BUDGET 2019/2020 - UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 14 February, 2019 (Item 8), when members had agreed a total Carbon Budget for the Council of 61,786 tonnes of CO₂e for 2019/2020, there was circulated and **noted** a report dated 29 April, 2019, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which explained the carbon reduction targets for each of the Services within the Council and to which was appended a summary of carbon budget monitoring by Service for the forthcoming year.

After consideration, the Committee:-

- (1) **requested** officers to investigate the possible introduction of the mandatory use of pool cars by councillors, on the same terms as currently required of officers, potentially removing the option of claiming mileage expenses for the use of a personal vehicle on official business, and
- (2) **agreed** to encourage the continuing use of the most sustainable transport options for both members and officers.

8. INTERNATIONAL FAIR TRADE CHARTER

There was circulated and **noted** a report dated 29 April, 2019, by the Director of Infrastructure Services (1) which explained that the Council was currently a member of the Scottish Fair Trade Forum and had been approached to pledge support for the new International Fair Trade Charter and (2) to which was appended a copy of the Charter itself.

Thereafter, on behalf of the Council, the Committee **agreed** to pledge support for the International Fair Trade Charter.

9. RESOURCES AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY COMMITMENT

Consideration was given to a circulated report dated 30 April, 2019, by the Director of Infrastructure Services (1) which explained that Scotland was pursuing a transition to a society and economy consuming and wasting fewer resources, supported by Scotland's Zero Waste Plan and Circular Economy Strategy, aiming to change the way in which products are designed, used, re-used, repaired and re-cycled, (2) which advised that Aberdeenshire Council had already committed to reducing its consumption of resources in support of Circular Economy principles, through its Environmental and Climate Change Policy, (3) which outlined other ways in which the Council was addressing concerns regarding single use plastic and the use of finite resources globally, (4) which highlighted matters discussed at the recent workshop on Resources and the Circular Economy Commitment and (5) to which was appended a copy of the Commitment document itself.

After detailed consideration, the Committee:-

- (1) **noted, approved and endorsed** the draft Resources and Circular Economy Commitment appended to the report,

- (2) **noted** output from the officer and member engagement process, as appended to the report, and
- (3) **requested** the Head of Economic Development and Protective Services to submit a report to a future meeting of Aberdeenshire Council, recommending the formal adoption of the Commitment, alongside a developed framework for its implementation, following full consultation with relevant officers, and members of other policy committees, as detailed within the report.

10. PLASTIC FREE COMMUNITIES - UPDATE

Members **noted** an oral report by the Internal Waste Reduction Officer on the Plastic Free Communities initiative and the implications of pursuing it within Aberdeenshire.

11. CLIMATE CHANGE RISK REGISTER

The Committee **noted** an oral report by the Sustainability and Climate Change Graduate Intern on the Climate Change Risk Register.

12. ATTENDANCE AT THE COSLA CLIMATE ADAPTATION SESSION FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

Consideration was given to a circulated report dated 16 May, 2019, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which advised that an information session on Climate Adaptation would be held for Scottish councillors in Glasgow on 19 June, 2019, to assist elected members to gain knowledge, communicate and lead local responses to Climate Adaptation.

After consideration, the Committee:-

- (1) **approved** the attendance of an elected member at the COSLA Climate Adaptation Session for Elected Members, and
- (2) **agreed** that Councillor Davidson should attend the conference on behalf of the Council.