

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 13 NOVEMBER, 2019

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

Apologies: Councillors N Baillie, I Taylor and A Wallace.

Officers: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services; Engineering Services Manager; Strategic Finance Manager; Team Leader (Sustainability and Climate Change), Infrastructure Services; Principal Energy Management Engineer, Business Services; Principal Solicitor (Democratic Services), Legal and Governance; and Senior Committee Officer (Allan Bell), Legal and Governance.

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 SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE OF 28 AUGUST, 2019

On consideration of the circulated Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 28 August, 2019, members **approved** it as a correct record, after which the Minute was signed by the Chair.

4. COMMUNITY HYDROGEN GENERATION

Members **noted** an oral presentation by Ian McLean of Locogen and Donald Boyd of Huntly and District Development Trust, on the Huntly Community Hydrogen Generation Project.

5. CARBON REDUCTION IN BUILDINGS - FINANCING ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 27 February, 2019 (Item 5), when members had requested officers to arrange a workshop session on the financing of energy efficiency measures, to be attended by the Head of Finance and the Head of Property and Facilities Management, there was circulated a report dated 8 October, 2019, by the Director

of Business Services (1) which provided (a) an update on the workshop session, which had taken place on 7 May, 2019 and (b) a short-to-medium-term action plan with timescales and recommendations for the implementation of energy efficiency measures in Council operational buildings, together with details of how these would be financed, (2) which outlined energy consumption, costs and carbon emissions from Council operational buildings in 2018/19 and (3) to which were appended an energy cost forecast for 2019/20, proposed programme of works for energy efficient carbon reduction measures in Council premises and an Energy Efficiency Measures Action Plan.

After consideration, the Committee:-

- (1) **noted** the change in energy consumption, costs and emissions in 2018/19 from previous years,
- (2) **noted** and **agreed** to support a recommendation to finance energy efficiency measures via the existing Carbon Reduction Budget within the Capital Plan, assessed on a project-by-project basis,
- (3) **agreed** to endorse the proposed action plan with timescales, for the implementation of energy reduction projects within Council operational buildings, and
- (4) **instructed** officers to arrange a workshop session, to which all councillors would be invited, to help inform the Council's approach to making future investment decisions on energy and carbon savings, on a business case-based methodology, with particular focus on considerations such a future energy costs and payback terms.

6. PUBLIC SECTOR CLIMATE CHANGE DUTIES REPORTING SUBMISSION 2018/19

Consideration was given to a circulated report dated 7 October, 2019, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, to which was appended the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report 2018/19 for Aberdeenshire Council, covering how climate change has been governed and managed, emissions totals, plans for further reductions in 2019/20, action on adaptation, and sustainable procurement.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (1) **noted** difficulties occasioned by frequent changes to the reporting mechanism,
- (2) **approved** the Council's completed submission for the 2018/19 reporting year to the Sustainable Scotland Network, on behalf of the Scottish Government, and
- (3) **delegated** authority to the Chief Executive to sign the declaration at Part 6 of the submission.

7. "BIG CLIMATE CONVERSATION: THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SECTOR BODIES IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE. A CONSULTATION"

Consideration was given to a circulated report dated 7 October, 2019, by the Director of Infrastructure Services (1) which explained that the Scottish Government had released a consultation document entitled, "Big Climate Conversation: the Role of Public Sector Bodies in Tackling Climate Change. A Consultation" and (2) to which was attached a draft response on behalf of the Council.

Having **noted** the draft response, including members' comments in respect of identifying resources to help public sector bodies increase action to combat climate change, the fact that establishing a network of chief executives in respect of climate change issues was unnecessary, and the identification of a climate abatement cost curve to enable the Council to

demonstrate accompanying cost efficiencies, the Committee **agreed** to delegate authority to the Head of Economic Development and Protective Services to submit the final response to the Scottish Government, following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee and the main opposition group spokesperson.

8. CARBON BUDGET 2020/21

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 28 August, 2019 (Item 7), when officers had been instructed to submit a report to a future meeting with a review of current carbon reduction targets, there was circulated and **noted** a report dated 7 October, 2019, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which (1) outlined progress with setting the Carbon Budget for 2020/21, (2) reviewed the Council's current emission reduction target of 44% by 2025 and (3) outlined considerations for the Council to take into account in amending its target, together with a plan of action.

Having **noted** the proposed Carbon Budget for 2020/21, together with members' comments in respect of engaging and taking along local communities with the Council's approach, ensuring initiatives were not solely restricted to being pursued within the Council, identifying a central point of contact within the Council for the general public, community champions, and the construction of a single, coherent, corporate message from the Council, the Committee:-

- (1) **requested** officers to develop a detailed approach to achieving an ambitious change to the Council's emission reduction targets and to present these to a future meeting of the Council, and
- (2) **instructed** officers to arrange a workshop session for all councillors in January, 2020, with a view to identifying the content of the Carbon Budget for the next year and over the next ten years.

9. ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL POLLINATOR ACTION PLAN 2019-2021

There was circulated and **approved** a report dated 13 September, 2019, by the Director of Infrastructure Services (1) which advised that the Council's Pollinator Action Plan 2019-2021 set out work to be undertaken to address the decline of pollinating insects in land owned and managed by the Council, as well as how it intended to work with, and influence, others and (2) to which was appended a copy of the Action Plan itself.