

REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 11 MARCH 2021

CARBON BUDGET SIX-MONTHLY UPDATE AND COVID-19 SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE LESSONS LEARNED

1 Reason for Report/Summary

- 1.1 The report presents the Infrastructure Services Carbon Budget six-monthly update. This update is required to be brought to both the Infrastructure Services Committee and Sustainability Committee following the decision of Aberdeenshire Council on 18 March 2020 (Item 10), Carbon Budget 2020-21.
- 1.2 This particular report also includes lessons learned across Infrastructure Services during Covid-19 relating to sustainability and climate change, as requested by the Sustainability Committee at its meeting on 20 May 2020 (Item 5).

2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Consider and comment on the Infrastructure Services Carbon Budget six-monthly update, as attached in Appendix 1;**
- 2.2 Determine any further actions required by the Director of Infrastructure Services with regard to the Infrastructure Services Carbon Budget or from the Covid-19 sustainability and climate change lessons learned; and**
- 2.3 Note the ongoing responsibility of each Director to secure their reduction targets as set out in the Carbon Budget, and to report progress at six-monthly to the relevant Policy Committees and to the Sustainability Committee.**

3 Purpose and Decision-Making Route

- 3.1 All Directors are required to submit Carbon Budget six-monthly updates to their relevant Policy Committee(s) and additionally to the Sustainability Committee following the decision of Aberdeenshire Council on 18 March 2020 (Item 10) Carbon Budget 2020-21.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 The Carbon Budget for 2020/21 was set at the meeting of Aberdeenshire Council on 18 March 2020. For Infrastructure Services the target for carbon reduction for 2020/21 was set at 1700 tCO₂e which is 50% of the Council's overall target of 3400 tCO₂e. At the same meeting each Service was instructed to update their Policy Committee on a six-monthly basis. This is the second

such update. The first update was reported to the meeting of this Committee on 1 October 2020 (Item 6).

- 4.2 That report made comment that for the first 6 months of 2020/21 the Covid-19 pandemic had changed working practices significantly and this had led to a significant shortfall in identified projects and delivery of these projects. This has continued into the second half of this financial year. All of the projects listed within **Appendix 1** have been delayed or stopped as a result of Covid-19 and limited carbon reduction associated with those projects has been identified.
- 4.3 **Appendix 1** to this report is an updated version of the Action Plan update that went before the Sustainability Committee on 20 May 2020 (Item 5). Members are directed to the February update for the current position. This shows that the forecast carbon reduction in 2020/21 for this Service from identified projects is 224 tCO₂e with a further saving of 190 tCO₂e from reduced travel as shown in paragraph 4.5 below, leading to an overall saving of 414 tCO₂e.
- 4.4 At its meeting in May 2020 the Sustainability Committee was keen to capture the areas where different ways of working that led to reduced carbon output could be identified. Within Infrastructure Service these areas fall into 2 main areas, firstly at a Corporate level the Service's share of travel and secondly specific functions that the Service delivers.
- 4.5 Final travel figures for grey fleet mileage for 2020/21 will become available in May/June but it is reasonable to assume that the 80% reduction seen earlier in the year continued to be the case. This leads to a reduction in Carbon emissions by approximately 145 tCO₂e. Rail and air travel did not take place and based on figures available from the previous year this has an estimated saving of 27 tCO₂e (18 tCO₂ from air travel and 9 tCO₂e from rail travel, respectively). Whilst these savings were not part of the approved Carbon Budget for 2020/21, it is intended to incorporate reduced travel as part of the Directorate Carbon Reduction Plan described in paragraph 4.7 below.
- 4.6 For specific functions undertaken by the Service it remains difficult to produce robust figures for how different ways of working have led to reduced carbon output. Since the last update the country has come out of, then gone back into lockdown. Some recent examples of approaches that could become more permanent include the digital consultation on the Local Development Plan and the introduction of virtual site visits and data sharing through the Teams platform. This means that only 1 site visit is undertaken per planning application rather than 2 or 3 depending on the number of consultees. It is intended to undertake a more detailed review when a more "normal" situation is in place. This review will feed into the Carbon Reduction Plan described in paragraph 4.7 below.
- 4.7 A report shall go to Aberdeenshire Council on 17 March 2021 seeking approval for the Carbon Budget for financial year 2021/22. The contents of the report on the Carbon Budget will be reported verbally to this meeting. As well as setting the targets, the report also included recommendations to instruct Directors to each develop a Carbon Reduction Plan, setting out how their Directorate will

reach 75% emissions reduction by 2030, and Net Zero by 2045, and present this to their relevant Policy Committee(s) by 31 October 2021. It is proposed to bring the Carbon Reduction Plan for Infrastructure Services to the meeting of this Committee on 30 September 2021.

- 4.8 The report to Aberdeenshire Council will also include a recommendation to instruct the Director of Infrastructure Services to develop a Medium-Term Carbon Strategy, based on the 4 Directorate Carbon Reduction Plans, to be presented alongside the Carbon Budget 2022-23.
- 4.9 In December 2020 the Scottish Government published and update to its Climate Change Plan <https://www.gov.scot/publications/securing-green-recovery-path-net-zero-update-climate-change-plan-20182032/> and has been taking evidence on this update at parliamentary committees during January and February of 2021. Officers will take account of these national commitments and the evidence provided to Parliament as part of the ongoing work of the Council to tackle Climate Change.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 5.1 This report supports the embedding of the key principle of ‘climate and sustainability’ in the new Strategic Priorities of Aberdeenshire Council.
- 5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	X		
Staffing	X		
Equalities		X	
Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Town Centre First			X
Sustainability	X		
Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing			X

- 5.3 The financial and staffing implications of meeting Carbon Budget targets are potentially significant but will need to be addressed on an individual action or project basis. Implications will need to be identified for the organisation as a whole so that they can inform the Council’s Medium-Term Financial Strategy to ensure affordability and also across the Council’s corporate and informed approach.
- 5.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out as part of the Carbon Budget process and no detrimental impact has been identified.

- 5.5 A Town Centre Impact Assessment has not been completed as part of the Carbon Budget process as no direct impacts on Town Centres have been identified, however further developments and projects will need to be assessed for potential impact on Town Centres.
- 5.6 Specific risks in setting the Carbon Budget have been identified as part of the Carbon Budget process. The following Risks have been identified as relevant to the Carbon Budget on a Corporate Level:
- Risk ID ACORP010 as it relates to environmental challenges and Risk ID ACORP006 as it relates to reputation management within the Corporate Risk Register).

The following Risks have been identified as relevant to the Carbon Budget on a Strategic Level:

- Risk ID ISSR004 as it relates to Climate Change in the Directorate Risk Registers.

6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of F.1.1 and F.7.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the scrutiny of the implementation of the Carbon Budget for services within the remit of the Committee.

Alan Wood
Director of Infrastructure Services

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24 February 2021

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Infrastructure Services Carbon Budget six-monthly update

2.3 Alison Gear Box - software update to make vehicle more efficient - reduce consumption - 30 vehicles, 20,000 miles each	60	60	20		0				Due to Covid-19 there has been a delay into 2021/22. The forecast reflects the delay.
2.4 Introduce more electric powered mowers	0	0	?0		0				None bought this year yet. A trial to determine fitness of purpose will proceed in 2021/22.
2.5 Installation of EV Chargers in Council Offices and Depots	0	0	0		0				Delayed due to Covid-19 but 10 have now been purchased and will be installed in 2021/22. No direct carbon saving from their installation but necessary infrastructure to recharge new EVs.
2.6 Replacement of old High Intensity Discharge street lighting with LED units.	400	400	200		200				All supplier/manufacturers were either closed or have limited resource due to Covid-19 restrictions. Progress has been less than originally planned for and the project has been extended to 2021/22 to ensure completion.
2.7 Significant decrease of electricity emission factor	TBC	TBC	TBC		TBC				The DEFRA data for 2020 shows a 9% reduction in electricity emissions for reporting in the 2020/2021 year. This is a reduction irrelevant to what energy efficiency projects we do but should be counted as part of the budget moving forward. The final saving will be known towards the end of the financial year.
2.8 Resources and Circular Economy Commitment - Framework Development	TBC	TBC	TBC		TBC				Since summer 2020 Aberdeenshire Council has had support from Circular North-east to identify key areas for circular economy progress across Services. This work is part of Services developing Resources and Circular Economy Frameworks as required

									by our Resources and Circular Economy Commitment. In Infrastructure Services areas that have been identified for further investigation (ongoing) are incorporating circular economy principles into regeneration work and the potential to local materials networks to promote further reuse in roads and construction materials. Although all potential carbon savings may not fall within the remit of the Carbon Budget, where possible project projected savings will be assessed.
2.9 Warp-It	70	70	20	15	12				The ongoing use of the Warp-It reuse portal within the Council (managed by Infrastructure Services) is expected to bring ongoing savings, however, due to the uncertainty around operational restrictions going forward and the use of offices, the saving for 2021-22 is not estimated. This situation will be monitored, and further support offered as appropriate. It should also be noted that any significant changes in the Council estate and use of properties could lead to large amounts of surplus furniture and equipment and have the potential for increased carbon in the Council's waste stream.'
2.10 LEDs at our Household Recycling Centres	0	0	0		0				Due to current Covid-19 situation all non-essential work is on hold until further notice. First project is for LEDs at Crow's Nest - service looking at other sites - budget allotted for project is £65,000 but actual costs and savings are still to be determined.
2.11 Crow's Nest Further projects - Leachate Pond	2	2	0		0				Due to current Covid-19 situation all non-essential work is on hold until further notice. Planning has been done but work won't be able to start until business is back to some sort of normality.

										Carbon savings will be linked to the leachate no longer being driven offsite to be treated during colder months (estimated transport saving of 2tCO ₂ e). Still trying to get the optimal design option with architect completed.
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