

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

SKYPE MEETING, 25 AUGUST, 2021

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

Apologies: Councillors S Dickinson and S Wallace.

Officers: Head of Service (Planning and Environment), Head of Service (Transportation), Team Leader (Economic Development & Protective Services), Sustainability & Climate Change Officer, Circular Economy Officer, Planning Service Manager, Waste Support Leader, all Infrastructure Services; Business Partner, Finance (Chris Smith), Principal Energy Management Engineer (Property & Facilities), both Business Services; Principal Solicitor (Arlene Gibbs) and Committee Officer (Kasia Balina), both Legal and People.

Also in attendance: Kelly Wiltshire, Climate Ready Aberdeenshire

1. SEDERANT AND DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked Members if they had any interests to declare, in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Councillor M Ford declared an interest in respect of Item 7 by virtue of his wife being a member of the steering group for Climate Ready Aberdeenshire (as a Stakeholder and Partnership Executive of Scottish Enterprise). Having applied the objective test he concluded that his interest was remote and insignificant, and therefore he would remain during consideration of the item.

2. STATEMENT ON EQUALITIES

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

On consideration of the circulated Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 19 May, 2021, Members **agreed** to approve it as a correct record.

4. PROGRESS WITH OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

There was circulated a report by the Director of Business Services, which updated Members on progress with actions agreed at previous meetings of the Sustainability Committee.

After consideration, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the current position in respect of the actions arising at previous meetings;
- (2) that those actions which had been completed be removed from the list.

5. REGIONAL LAND USE PLANNING PARTNERSHIP – NORTH EAST REGION PILOT PROJECT

There was circulated a report dated 10 June, 2021 by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought Members' views on the Council's joint participation with Aberdeen City Council as a pilot region in response to the Scottish Government's proposal to establish Regional Land Use Partnerships. The report presented the scope, aims and objectives of the pilot project, the Council's role, future expectations and how it would contribute to the Strategic Priorities of the Council.

Having considered Members' comments on the list of stakeholders; the importance of an appropriate governance structure and process; a natural capital approach and the data to be made available in future reports, the Committee **agreed** to: -

- (1) note the Council's participation in the pilot project; and
- (2) instruct officers to submit a report to a future meeting with detailed information on the governance process (specifically including the role of the Sustainability Committee in the Regional Land Use Planning Partnership).

6. ROUTE MAP TO 2030

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 24 June, 2021 (Item 10), when a one-off allocation of £100,000 to support the next phase of developing the Carbon Budget setting process had been agreed, there was circulated a report dated 30 July, 2021 by the Director of Infrastructure Services which presented a project outline for developing a Route Map to 2030 which would consist of a costed Carbon Budget, meeting the target of 75% reduction in carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions by 31 March 2031.

The report explained that the Carbon Budget had never been fully integrated into the financial budgets and that was required if the Council was to fully understand the

financial impact of reaching a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030. There was a desire to advance the Carbon Budget setting methodology to produce a firm budget (carbon and financial) for the period of 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2027 with an indicative budget up to 31 March 2031 which would help to achieve the target of a 75% reduction in CO₂e.

The report further explained that to advance the Carbon Budget to that level a consultant would be required to support officers to develop a toolkit. The methodology used within the toolkit would allow for costs per tonne of CO₂e saved for all the significant measures to be identified. Transparency in the methodology would allow officers to update the toolkit annually, as required, to ensure the Council was making assumptions based on the latest data available for costs and savings.

Members were informed that the funding of £100,000 would be utilised for the procurement of a consultancy to support and up-skill officers in Aberdeenshire Council with its Route Map to 2030 development.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note the proposed project outline for the development of a 'Route Map to 2030', as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) request officers to consider the use of special urgency powers to expedite the procurement of a consultant to support the development of a 'Route Map to 2030'; and otherwise note that a report would be submitted to Infrastructure Services Committee seeking urgent approval of a supplementary procurement plan for the procurement of a consultant to support the development of a 'Route Map to 2030';
- (3) acknowledge the importance of the 'Route Map to 2030' and that the project be branded as Aberdeenshire Council's COP26 Project; and
- (4) instruct officers to arrange a workshop for Members on the methodology used within the toolkit.

7. CLIMATE READY ABERDEENSHIRE (PRESENTATION)

A presentation was made to the Committee on Climate Ready Aberdeenshire (CRA) by Ms Kelly Wiltshire, the Vice Chair of Climate Ready Aberdeenshire.

The presentation covered aspects including: contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report; working in partnership with all members on the steering group consisting of senior representatives from organisations throughout the North East of Scotland; COP26; Aberdeenshire Climate Change Declaration and support provided to CRA; and the Climate Route Map to 2030. It also provided Members with detailed information on the new structure of CRA working groups namely: adaptation and resilience; mitigation and net zero; protecting and enhancing biodiversity; and sustainable economy and communities.

There followed a question and answer session.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to concur with the Chair in thanking Ms Wiltshire for an informative presentation.

8. SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM

The Team Leader, Economic Development and Protective Services, provided an update on the progress of the team's main projects, with particular reference to the bids for external funding and Route Map to 2030. She also thanked the Circular Economy Officer for his contribution to the Committee during her absence.

Thereafter and having considered Members' comments on staffing and financial resources within the team, the Committee **agreed** to note the update from the Sustainability and Climate Change Team.

9. CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The Circular Economy Officer gave a presentation which updated Members on the circular economy work across the Council.

The nature and benefits of a more circular economy were recapped and the existing Council foundation of the Resources and Circular Economy Commitment emphasised. An update was given on the recent support and report from Circular North-East which identified circular opportunities and lessons in the Council. It was noted that the work of Circular North-East commended the Council's Resources and Circular Economy Commitment, highlighted the benefit of having a dedicated Circular Economy Officer and identified some key projects and areas in which circular thinking could be integrated. It was also highlighted that the Strategic Leadership Team had requested a report on the next steps for embedding circular economy across the Council and region. Areas being considered for this report included: internal reuse; building materials in the North-East (e.g. granite); procurement; Household Recycling Centres and reuse; and Economic Development.

Thereafter, and having considered Members' comments regarding the need for increased publicity for circular economy projects, the Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the information provided and thanked the Circular Economy Officer for his presentation, as well as his contribution to the Committee over the last year.