

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

VIRTUAL MEETING, 15 JUNE, 2022

Present: Councillors S Dickinson (Chair), J Gifford (Vice-Chair), N Baillie (as substitute for Councillor A Kloppert), S Brown, P Johnston, F Joji, S Payne and I Taylor.

Apology: Councillor A Kloppert.

Officers: Head of Environment & Sustainability, Circular Economy Officer, Sustainable Development Officer, Housing Manager, Environment Planner, Policy Manager (Roads & Infrastructure), Sustainability & Climate Change Officer, all Environment and Infrastructure Services; Business Partner, Finance (Moirra Beverly), Principal Solicitor (Arlene Gibbs) and Committee Officer (Kasia Balina), all Business Services.

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 16 FEBRUARY, 2022

On consideration of the circulated Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 16 February, 2022, Members **agreed** to approve it as a correct record.

4. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

There was circulated a report by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which updated Members on progress with actions agreed at previous meetings of the Committee held since 19 May, 2021. With regard to the Item 2, it

was confirmed, that a workshop would be arranged by officers to take place after the summer recess, in September 2022.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to note the current position in respect of actions arising from previous meetings.

5. SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE – INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Environment and Sustainability, which provided Members with information on the Committee and officers' roles and responsibilities, including legislative requirements.

The Committee **agreed** to concur with the Chair in thanking Mr Wallace for an informative presentation.

6. ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL ROUTE MAP TO 2030 AND BEYOND

With reference to the Minutes of Meetings of the Sustainability Committee of 25 August, 2021 (Item 6), when approval had been given to the project outline for the one-off allocation and consultants Arcadis had begun working on the Route Map 2030 and Toolkit development, and Aberdeenshire Council of 9 March, 2022 (Item 7), when the Council had approved the Carbon Budget 2022-23 and, at the same meeting, £500,000 had been approved to support the further development of the Route Map through necessary feasibility work on a cross section of the Council's operational buildings, there was circulated a report dated 6 June, 2022, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which presented the draft of Aberdeenshire Council's Route Map 2030 and Beyond which had been developed by consultants, with the support of Aberdeenshire Council officers.

The Route Map 2030 and Beyond covered key activities and targets driving the development of the Route Map, recommendations grouped by process and organisation, technology, information, people and culture, and the Future Carbon Budgets, with actions focusing on the largest emitters, namely the Council's operational buildings, fleet and LED streetlight programme.

Members were informed that the project had looked at what the requirements would be across the Council to reach its own 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 target and Net Zero by 2045. Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO₂e) emissions and financial estimates had been made for projects identified. A part of that work included the development of a toolkit which would identify a complete view of decarbonisation progress against planned CO₂e reduction. That included a view of the Capital/Revenue impact and cost effectiveness (£/tCO₂e) of each reduction project so that the Council could analyse the impact on the overall budget and prioritise project selection.

Members made comments on the supply chain capacity, procurement review, charging and refuelling infrastructure required before the fleet replacement and communication and cooperation with local communities.

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

- (1) instruct the Director of Environment and Infrastructure to circulate the report to Area Committees for their consideration and comments, following which to progress the delivery of a workshop for Sustainability Committee Members, the Chairs, Vice Chairs and opposition spokespersons of the Policy Committees, on the route map and the methodology used within the toolkit; and thereafter to finalise and present a report to Full Council for approval;
- (2) instruct officers to organise a briefing session on how to procure the local supply chain across the council; and
- (3) instruct officers to circulate the presentation 'Route Map Development Update' by Arcadis.

7. UK EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME (UK ETS) UPDATE

There was circulated a report dated 6 June, 2022, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which provided an update on the proposals for the development of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS), as set out in the UK Government consultation 'Developing the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS)'.

Members were informed that the UK ETS was a significant scheme for various economic sectors. The proposals had limited direct interaction with Council business and the Council was not planning to submit a full consultation response. However, Chapter 7 of the proposals covered a call for evidence on expanding the UK ETS to include waste incineration and energy from waste and the report did highlight the draft response to those proposals from the NESS Energy Project in which Aberdeenshire Council was a partner.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note the proposals for development of the UK ETS;
- (2) note the potential for the proposals under the scheme to impact upon future activities in Aberdeenshire;
- (3) note the draft response to Chapter 7 of the proposals, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (4) instruct officers to submit the report on carbon emissions from energy from the waste facilities; and
- (5) instruct officers to bring back the information on how the UK ETS would be monitored.

8. LOCAL HEAT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY STRATEGY (LHEES) DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

There was circulated a report dated 6 June, 2022, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which informed Members on progress in respect to the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) being developed for the

Aberdeenshire area that Aberdeenshire Council officers had been working on with the support of consultants.

Members were informed that the LHEES would identify what needed to be done to change buildings and local infrastructure over the next 15 to 20 years to fulfil the Scottish Government's objectives and local priorities relating to heat in buildings. Part of the LHEES would include a Delivery Plan which would become an Action Plan to enable the Local Authority and its partners to work towards delivery of the changes required as identified in the LHEES.

Having noted Members' comments on the usage of geographic information system (GIS) techniques, Heat Network Zoning and the types of energy used to deliver the heated water, the Committee **agreed** to note the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy Update.

9. ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRESS IN COUNCIL HOUSES

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Communities Committee of 24 March, 2022 (Item 10), when it had been agreed that a report be submitted to the Sustainability Committee (1) detailing the work undertaken by Housing and Building Standards to meet energy efficiency standards and to move towards Net Zero, and (2) providing the information to monitor the overall strategic progress of Aberdeenshire Council in becoming a carbon neutral Council, there was circulated a report dated 3 May, 2022, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which provided Members with an update on the actions that the Housing Service was undertaking to meet the interim climate targets and ensure long-term delivery of Council's net zero objective.

Having noted Members' comments regarding the target for properties to meet the EPC Band B being challenging to achieve and the need for regular reviews of the housing stock that could not be brought up to the required standard, the Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the report and note how the work of Housing and Building Standards sat with the wider work of Aberdeenshire Council in becoming a carbon neutral council.

10. ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL POLLINATOR ACTION PLAN 2022-2027

There was circulated a report dated 19 April, 2022 by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure which sought Members' approval of the Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2022-2027, a cross-Service document which identified the actions the Council would take to protect, enhance, and promote pollinator populations in Aberdeenshire.

Members were informed that Aberdeenshire Council was one of the first local authorities in Scotland to produce a Pollinator Action Plan in 2015. That Plan elapsed in 2017 and had been subsequently followed by the 2019 to 2021 Action Plan. The majority of actions in the previous Action Plan had been completed despite the impacts of the Covid pandemic. The Action Plan continued to help raise awareness of the importance of pollinators both in food production and in ecosystems, while also contributing to the monitoring and recording of pollinator populations. Members welcomed the Action Plan and made comments regarding the

use of pesticides and its impact on human health, cooperation with landscape services team being essential and the importance of engaging with communities about where greenspace should be enhanced and managed to enable pollinators to thrive.

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

- (1) approve the Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2022-2027;
- (2) instruct the Head of Planning and Economy to report annually on the progress of the Action Plan; and
- (3) instruct officers to bring back a report on the road verge management.

11. STREET LIGHTING LED UPGRADE PROGRAMME – UPDATE

There was circulated a report dated 27 May, 2022, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which (1) advised the Committee on progress in implementing the street lighting LED upgrade programme, (2) provided information on units upgraded, energy reduction, and carbon reduction, and (3) presented the cumulative costs and savings arising from the programme to date.

Members were informed that the Service had a well-established and effective process for designing and implementing LED upgrades to external lighting system. On completion of the programme to upgrade the street lighting stock, it may be worth extending the process to other external lighting within the service.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) acknowledge the progress that had been made in the Street Lighting LED Upgrade Programme to date;
- (2) endorse the completion of the programme to cover the remainder of the Council's street lighting stock; and
- (3) note that the process applied effectively to street lighting could produce a substantial carbon reduction and a good financial rate of return.

The Committee **agreed** to suspend Standing Order 2.1.2, in order to allow the meeting to continue beyond 1.00p.m.

12. FUTURE MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 23 September, 2021 (Item 13), when it had been agreed to introduce a Choice Based Blended Model of Fully Virtual and Hybrid Meetings, which incorporated the principle that meeting groups should be able to choose how they want to meet, there was circulated a report dated 27 May, 2022 by the Director of Business Services, which (1) informed Members that work was ongoing to develop an options appraisal for upgrading Council venues to provide a high quality hybrid experience, and (2) asked the Committee to confirm preferred arrangements for meetings for 2022/2023,

having regard to existing limitations including availability of audio visual equipment and staffing resources.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the options for fully virtual and hybrid meetings of the Committee as outlined in Section 3 of the report; and
- (2) to the fully virtual option as preferred arrangement for the meetings listed in Appendix 1 to the report.