

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

SKYPE MEETING, 17 FEBRUARY, 2020

Present: Councillors I Taylor (Chair), I Davidson (Vice-Chair), N Baillie, R Cassie, S Dickinson, M Ford, A Kloppert and A Ross.

Apologies: Councillor S Wallace.

Officers: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services, Team Leader (Sustainability and Climate Change), Sustainability & Climate Change Officer, all Infrastructure Services; Business Partner, Finance (Chris Smith), Principal Energy Management Engineer (Emma Donaldson), both Business Services; Legal Service Manager (Ruth O'Hare) and Committee Officer (Kasia Balina), both 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 11 NOVEMBER, 2020

On consideration of the circulated Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 11 November, 2020, members **approved** 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 action agreed at previous meeting of the Sustainability Committee.

After consideration, the Committee agreed:-

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

5. ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL 'BIODIVERSITY DUTY' REPORTING 2018 TO 2020

Reference was made to the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 which required all public bodies to report on their work in relation to the 'biodiversity duty' set out in the Act. In this regard there was circulated a report dated 22 January 2021, by the Director of Infrastructure Services requesting approval of Aberdeenshire Council's submission for the period 2018-2020.

The report highlighted the notable achievements in the reporting period including delivering the North East Non-Native Invasive Species Project and the Aberdeenshire Council Greenspace Project; producing the Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Strategy 2019-2021; reviewing Aberdeenshire's network of Local Nature Conservation Sites; the extensive Ranger Service programme of public events delivered and engagement with local communities and their adaptation during coronavirus restrictions; and Aberdeenshire Council being the first council in Scotland to produce a carbon budget in conjunction with the financial budgets each year.

Having considered the report, the Committee **agreed** the Aberdeenshire Council's biodiversity duty reporting submission to the Scottish Government, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report with the additional educational aspect of connecting people with nature.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

There was circulated a report dated 25 January 2021 by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the Sixth Carbon Budget Report from the Climate Change Commission, with particular reference to the 'Recommendations for Local Authorities' as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

The report recommended that Local Authorities consider nine priorities in their action on climate change. These were summarised with comments on their status within Aberdeenshire Council.

Having noted Members' comments in respect of the climate change being considered a key issue for pension funds, Green Finance know-how and collaborative working the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) request that the Head of Economic Development and Protective Services arrange for a dialogue to take place between the Sustainability Committee and all Directors during the development of carbon reduction plans, preferably by attendance at a committee meeting;
- (2) that the Chair would write to the Climate Change Commission commending the Council's Carbon Budget process.

7. VERBAL UPDATE FROM SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM

The Committee heard an oral report by the Team Leader, Economic Development and Protective Services, which provided an update from the Sustainability and Climate Change Team with particular reference to the idea of including a formal paragraph within the committee report template highlighting the carbon budget implications; the sustainability pioneers working on vision, objectives and plans of the future Sustainability Champions programme; the annual report on the Climate Ready Aberdeenshire 2020-2030 to be on the Climate Ready Aberdeenshire Website; the details and methodology of the Carbon Budget 2021-2022 report to be presented to the meeting of Full Council in March 2021.

The Committee **agreed** to note the update.