

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

SKYPE MEETING, 19 MAY, 2021

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 Service (Planning and Environment), Team Leader (Economic Development & Protective Services), Sustainability & Climate Change Officer, Business Collaboration Manager (Transportation), all Infrastructure Services; Team Manager (Resources and Performance), Education and Children's Services; Business Service Manager (Strategy & Business Services), Health & Social Care; Business Partner, Finance (Chris Smith), Engineering Services Manager (Property & Facilities), Principal Energy Management Engineer (Property & Facilities), Senior Energy Manager (Property & Facilities), all Business Services; Legal Service Manager (Ruth O'Hare) and Committee Officer (Kasia Balina), both Legal and People.

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 17 FEBRUARY, 2021

The Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 17 February, 2021, was **approved** 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) to add the Local Electricity Bill to the Outstanding Actions List; and
- (3) that those actions which had been completed be removed from the list.

5. CLIMATE CHANGE DECLARATION – RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

With reference to the Minute of Aberdeenshire Council meeting of 18 March, 2020 (Item 9) , when approval had been given to the Climate Change Declaration and it had been agreed that a further report be presented to Full Council by December 2020, following consultation with all Policy Committees and Area Committees; there was circulated a report dated 21 April, 2021 by the Director of Infrastructure Services which presented recommended actions to enable Aberdeenshire Council to work towards the aims and targets set out in its Climate Change Declaration.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) provide the following comments on the recommended actions detailed in Appendix 1 to the report to enable Aberdeenshire Council to work towards the aims and target set out in its Climate Change Declaration:
 - a. Carbon Reduction Plans should shape behavioural changes with initiative programmes encouraged and developed at the Directorate level;
 - b. The Sustainability Committee require a methodology allowing to measure and monitor existing work and success;
 - c. concern raised about fuel poverty and the impact that internal emissions had on the most vulnerable parts of communities;
 - d. Aberdeenshire relied on energy industries therefore Climate Ready Aberdeenshire should work together to support energy; transition initiatives of Scottish Government should be considered;
 - e. consideration should be given to incorporating reducing emissions in the Local Development Plan; and

- (2) instruct the Interim Head of Economic Development and Protective Services to present the agreed recommended actions to Full Council for approval on 26 June 2021.

6. CARBON BUDGET SIX-MONTHLY UPDATE

There was circulated a report dated 5 May, 2021 by the Director of Infrastructure Services which presented an update on the reports that were submitted to each Policy Committee with a Carbon Budget six-monthly update.

The report explained that the Carbon Budget was set at the meeting of Aberdeenshire Council on 18 March 2020 (Item 10). For Aberdeenshire Council the target for carbon reduction for 2020/21 was set at 3400 tCO₂e. At the same meeting each Director was instructed to update the relevant Policy Committee on a six monthly basis on progress. The first update was presented to the Sustainability Committee on 11 November, 2020 (Item 10). With reference to that meeting, the Committee had agreed that the six monthly reports be submitted to Policy Committees and then to the Sustainability Committee in approximately May and November each year.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to: -

- (1) note the Carbon Budget six-monthly updates as attached in the Appendices to the report and provide the following comments:
 - a. Aberdeenshire Council should make informed decisions on carbon savings in the most financially efficient way;
 - b. the Action Plan should be realistic and achievable;
 - c. Town Impact Assessments required to be considered as part of Carbon Budget actions; and
 - d. Aberdeenshire Council' vehicle fleet would require to be modernised; and
- (2) note the ongoing responsibility of each Director to secure their reduction targets, as set out in the Carbon Budget, and to report progress on a six-monthly basis to the relevant Policy Committees and to the Sustainability Committee;
- (3) note the requirements for each Director to develop a Carbon Reduction Plan which must set out how their Directorate would reach a 75% emissions reduction by 2030, and Net Zero by 2045; and present this to the relevant Policy Committees by 31 October 2021; and
- (4) note the requirement for the Director of Infrastructure Services to develop a Medium-Term Carbon Strategy, based on the four Directorate Carbon Reduction Plans, to be presented alongside the Carbon Budget 2022-23.

7. DRAFT HEAT IN BUILDINGS CONSULTATION

There was circulated a report dated 7 May, 2021 by the Director of Business Services, which presented the Council's response to the consultation on the Draft Heat in Buildings Strategy published by the Scottish Government.

Having considered Members' comments on fuel poverty in terms of rising electricity costs, distribution costs and taxes; moving from gas to electric heating systems being an expensive option, the Committee **agreed** to note the response to the consultation on the Draft Heat in Buildings Strategy published by the Scottish Government.