

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

VIRTUAL MEETING, 30 NOVEMBER, 2022

Present: Councillors S Dickinson (Chair), S Brown, G Carr (as substitute for Councillor S Payne), P Johnston, F Joji, A Kloppert, T Mason (as substitute for Councillor J Gifford) and I Taylor.

Apologies: Councillors J Gifford and S Payne.

Officers: Team Leader (Environment and Sustainability), Waste Manager, Regeneration Executive, all Environment and Infrastructure Services; Hub Manager, Nescan; Community Benefits & Sustainable Procurement Manager, Business Partner, Finance (Moir Beverly), Solicitor (Lynsey Kimmitt) and Committee Officer (Kasia Balina), all Business Services.

INTRODUCTION

At the outset of the meeting the Chair highlighted the importance of participatory budgeting and involving communities in the process of deciding how public money is spent.

She confirmed that approval had been given to the distribution of funds in 2022/23 to projects with a focus on Climate/Carbon Reduction, in line with Council Priorities across school networks and, to date, over £32,000 worth of funding had been awarded to 18 schools projects to support a range of interventions and activities with a climate focus. These varied from rewilding projects and climate action research to eco group activities and more.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair congratulated the school groups who had been successful and wished good luck to those who were planning to take part in the second round of the project.

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 integrated 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 30 NOVEMBER 2022

On consideration of the circulated Minute of the Meeting of the Committee of 30 November, 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 the progress with actions agreed at previous meetings of the Committee held since 19 May, 2021.

The Environment and Sustainability Team Leader introduced the report and provided the Committee with an update on each of 7 outstanding actions and confirmed that (1) Items 1, 4 and 5a were on target and would remain on the list, and (2) Items 2, 3, 5b, 6 and 7 were complete and, if agreed, could be removed from the list.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

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

5. NORTH EAST SCOTLAND CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK (NESCOAN) HUB - PRESENTATION

A presentation was made to the Committee on North East Scotland Climate Action Network (NESCOAN) HUB by Ms Alison Stuart, North East Climate Action Network (NESCOAN) Hub Manager.

The presentation covered aspects including information on: the organisation members; examples of current work by the NESCOAN HUB for climate action and community organisations in North East Scotland; provision of help on funding, support and advice to those organisations; details of the Just Transition Fund Deliberative Processes Project in North East Scotland and Moray; Participatory Budgeting process and organisational information; and importance of collaboration in the delivery of the projects.

There followed a question and answer session during which Members made comments on the communication strategy and descriptions of projects.

Thereafter, the Committee concurred with the Chair in thanking Ms Stuart for an informative presentation and **agreed** that information on the Green Participatory Budgeting and voting process be shared with all Members of Aberdeenshire Council.

6. MAXIMISING LOCAL SUPPLIER INCLUSION IN COUNCIL CONTRACT OPPORTUNITIES/SUPPLY CHAINS - PRESENTATION

A presentation was made to the Committee on Maximising Local Supplier Inclusion in Council Contract Opportunities and Supply Chains by the Regeneration Executive and Community Benefits and Sustainable Procurement Manager.

Members heard about the main issues causing challenges for local suppliers' inclusion, including the objectives and limiting factors, historic performance and future plans and strategies; benefits of local supplier inclusion; current and historic performance on the local spend share; examples of work performed to increase the inclusion of local suppliers; planned activities for the Procurement Development Officer to engage private and third sector businesses in the area to support their growth opportunities through capacity building and to develop the initiatives to increase the tendering capabilities of Aberdeenshire businesses.

There followed a question and answer session during which Members made comments on the number and location of business breakfasts and drop-in sessions across Aberdeenshire.

Thereafter, the Committee concurred with the Chair in thanking officers for an informative presentation and **agreed** to instruct officers to keep members informed on how they could help to share this message and make the local businesses aware of forthcoming opportunities.

7. CARBON EMISSIONS FOR WASTE DISPOSAL

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 15 June, 2022 (Item 7), when it had been agreed that officers submit a report on carbon emissions from Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities and waste disposal options in general, there was circulated a report dated 18 November, 2022, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which (1) presented detailed information as to the carbon impact generated by the different waste disposal methods currently available to Aberdeenshire Council, and (2) highlighted the reduction in carbon impact once residual waste was diverted from landfill to the NESS energy from a waste facility once the build had been completed.

Members commented on the discrepancy between the energy from waste and landfill; challenges from the Cruden Bay pilot scheme and three bin collection trial; local examples of the circular economy; reporting mechanisms; the risk associated with fossil plastic; and statutory requirements to collect the garden waste.

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

- (1) note the carbon impact for each waste disposal method and the saving in carbon emissions that would be created once the residual waste was diverted from landfill disposal to energy from waste;

- (2) note that the NESS Energy Project was exploring the feasibility of Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) facilities as a means of reducing carbon impact from the NESS Energy from Waste facility; and
- (3) instruct officers to bring back detailed information on what had been included in the calculation of Zero Waste Scotland (based on the carbon metric impact tool) and the discrepancy between the energy from waste versus landfill and different reporting mechanisms.

8. PUBLIC BODIES CLIMATE CHANGE DUTIES REPORT 2021-2022

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 21 September, 2022 (Item 7), when the working draft of the report had been brought to the Committee for consideration and comment due to the deadline for submission clashing with the Committee meeting, there was circulated a report dated 18 November, 2022, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which presented the final Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Annual Report for 2021/22.

The Committee **agreed** to note Aberdeenshire Council's Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report 2021/22, which had been submitted to the Scottish Government on 25 November, 2022, following final consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition Spokesperson.

9. SCOTLAND'S COUNCILS' APPROACH TO ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE - AUDIT SCOTLAND REPORT

With reference to the Minute of the Meeting of the Committee of 21 September, 2022 (Item 7), when it had been requested that the Audit Scotland report be added to the business of the meeting in November, 2022, there was circulated a report dated 18 November, 2022, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which (1) contained a summary of the Audit Scotland Report 'Scotland's Councils' Approach to Addressing Climate Change' and how Aberdeenshire Council was addressing the recommendations published on 8 September, 2022, and (2) highlighted additional audits currently underway by Audit Scotland and Environmental Standards Scotland.

Members were informed that Councils had a critical role in helping Scotland to achieve its national climate change goals, in particular reducing CO2 emissions, adapting, and transforming services and therefore climate change must be central and integral to all Council activity.

The report included 5 recommendations for successfully addressing climate change and the enormous challenge, which it recognised that no Council could tackle in isolation. It highlighted that action would need to involve collaboration across all parts of government and society to bring about the required transformational change. It also stated that this would be an ongoing area of interest for the Accounts Commission through its annual audit, Best Value and performance audit work. Members were also informed there were currently two other audits/investigations underway.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note Aberdeenshire Council's progress towards addressing the recommendations, as set out by the Accounts Commission in the Audit Scotland report, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) note the upcoming audits and investigations underway by Audit Scotland and Environmental Standards Scotland;
- (3) instruct officers to include the Accounts Commission's 5 recommendations for Councils in future update reports on the Route Map; and
- (4) instruct officers to bring back an update on the two other audits and investigations underway by Audit Scotland and Environmental Standards Scotland.

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