

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

VIRTUAL MEETING, 21 SEPTEMBER, 2022

- Present:** Councillors S Dickinson (Chair), S Brown, P Johnston, F Joji, A Kloppert, S Payne, M Sullivan (as substitute for Councillor J Gifford) and I Taylor.
- Apology:** Councillor J Gifford.
- Officers:** Head of Environment and Sustainability, Circular Economy Officer, Sustainable Development Officer, all Environment and Infrastructure Services; Business Partner, Finance (Moira Beverly), Principal Solicitor (Arlene Gibbs) and Committee Officer (Kasia Balina), all Business Services.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair paid tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the longest serving British Monarch, who passed away at Balmoral, Aberdeenshire, on 8 September 2022.

The admiration and respect for Her Majesty had been highlighted by the monumental outpouring of love, and affection, from the people of Aberdeenshire as the Royal cortege travelled through the region.

The Chair also welcomed a new era, with the accession of King Charles III as the new Monarch.

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 15 JUNE, 2022

On consideration of the circulated Minute of the Meeting of the Committee of 15 June, 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 Head of Environment and Sustainability introduced the report and provided the Committee with an update on each of 4 outstanding actions and confirmed:

- Item 1 – no action had been undertaken so far, and there were no further publications or detail in respect of the outcomes of the second reading of the Local Electricity Bill;
- Item 2 - a report had been presented to all Area Committees and a workshop would be arranged by officers in due course; and
- Items 3 and 4 - the reports would be presented to the Committee in November 2022.

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

- (1) note the current position in respect of actions arising from previous meetings;
- (2) instruct officers to contact the sponsor of the Local Electricity Bill, MP David Johnston, to seek an update on the timeline and further information.

5. RESOURCES AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY COMMITMENT UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 21 November, 2019 (Item 5), when the approval had been given to the first Resources and Circular Economy Commitment, there was circulated a report dated 1 August, 2022, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which (1) provided an update on progress against the Commitment, and (2) shared the key areas where the Commitment was being, or could have been, worked out across the Council to enable the Committee to follow, scrutinise and support that progress.

The Circular Economy Officer introduced the report and presented examples of activities relating to maximising value from resources, reducing waste and other 'circular' principles being part of Council work.

Members made comments on the delivery of the internal project 'Reuse at Household Recycling Centres', the Joint Equipment Centre, the Aberdeenshire Conservation Recycle Store, the role of Sustainability Champions and regional business support and funding.

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

- (1) note the progress update against the Council's Resources and Circular Economy Commitment;
- (2) instruct officers to provide information on progress made in relation to the involvement of the Third Sector; and

- (3) instruct officers to consider delivering a workshop on the Circular Economy to various teams and Services across the Council.

6. CARBON BUDGET 2022-23 UPDATE.

With reference to the Minute of the Aberdeenshire Council meeting of 9 March, 2022 (Item 7), when the Council agreed a total Carbon Budget for 2022/23 of 47,383 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO₂e) in line with linear progression towards a 75% reduction in Council owned emissions by 2030, there was circulated a report dated 31 August, 2022 by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which provided an update to the Committee on progress to date towards the actions listed in the Carbon Budget 2022/23.

The Head of Environment and Sustainability introduced the report and advised the Committee that due to supply chain issues in materials and equipment, as well as capacity challenges and budget constraints, progress had not been as hoped, and Appendix 2 provided information on progress on each of the actions listed. It was also noted that work was underway on a number of projects, including the continued identification of funding opportunities to support Aberdeenshire Council in reaching its emission reduction targets.

There followed a discussion on funding opportunities to support Aberdeenshire Council in reaching its emission reduction targets, the Sustainability Champions event, and cooperation with the North East Climate Action Network (NESCAN).

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

- (1) acknowledge the Carbon Budget six-monthly update, as attached in Appendix 2 to the report;
- (2) note the ongoing responsibility of each Director to secure their reduction targets as set out in the Carbon Budget, and to report progress at six-monthly intervals to the relevant Policy Committees and to the Sustainability Committee;
- (3) instruct officers to provide additional information on the successful expression of interest in the Just Transition Fund; and
- (4) receive a report on cooperation with the North East Climate Action Network (NESCAN).

7. PUBLIC BODIES CLIMATE CHANGE DUTIES REPORT 2021/22.

There was circulated a report dated 31 August, 2022 by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which sought approval of Aberdeenshire Council's Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Annual Report for 2021/22.

Aberdeenshire Council's draft Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Annual Report 2021/22 was included as Appendix 1 to the report. The report also included a comparison of 2020/2021 consumption data, emission factors and emission data for 2021/2022 and presented the overview of Aberdeenshire Council's annual progress towards its 75% reduction by 2030 target. The report highlighted that the emissions had increased overall. However, that had been expected as Covid-19 played a significant part in driving down emissions in the previous year 2020/21.

Members commented on the emissions taken out of the atmosphere, landfill refuse and carbon sequestration methods.

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

- (1) note Aberdeenshire Council's draft Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report 2021/22 and to delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services to submit the finalised report to the Scottish Government by 30 November, 2022, following consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition Spokesperson;
- (2) note that the draft report would be updated as more data and information was received from officers across the organisation and a final copy would be presented to the Committee at the meeting on 30 November 2022 for noting;
- (3) delegate authority to the Chief Executive to sign the declaration in Part 6e of the report once the final draft was completed; and
- (4) instruct officers to provide additional information on emissions from natural gas, oil gas and liquefied petroleum gas through operational buildings and biomass (wood chips and pallets).

8. ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL ROUTE MAP 2030 AND BEYOND UPDATE.

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 5 June, 2022 (Item 6), when it had been agreed to 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 and the Chairs, Vice Chairs and opposition spokespersons of Policy Committees on the Route Map and the methodology used within the toolkit, and thereafter finalise and present the report to Full Council for approval, there was circulated a report dated 13 August, 2022 by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure, which (1) provided the updated draft of Aberdeenshire Council's Route Map 2030 and Beyond which had been developed by consultants with the support of Aberdeenshire Council officers, (2) presented new estimated figures, and (3) provided feedback from Area Committees, where possible.

Members made comments on the Council's operational buildings, the role of hydrogen in energy transition and hydrogen strategy and tree planting. Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note the feedback provided by the Area Committees on the Route Map 2030 and Beyond, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report;
- (2) note the updated draft Route Map 2030 and Beyond, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (3) instruct the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services to finalise the Route Map 2030 and Beyond in order for it to be presented to Full Council on 29 September 2022 for approval.