

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Strategic Lead, Regeneration****Council: 25 November 2020**

Subject: Climate Change Strategy**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Council on a new Climate Change Strategy, which provides an overarching route map on how the Council intends to achieve net zero emissions by 2045.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Council:
- (i) note the content of this report;
 - (ii) agree on the content of the Climate Change Strategy and its long term aspirations;
 - (iii) agree to support the adoption of Climate Change actions across Council operations to ensure we achieve net zero emissions by 2045.
 - (iv) agree to procure external support in the delivery of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

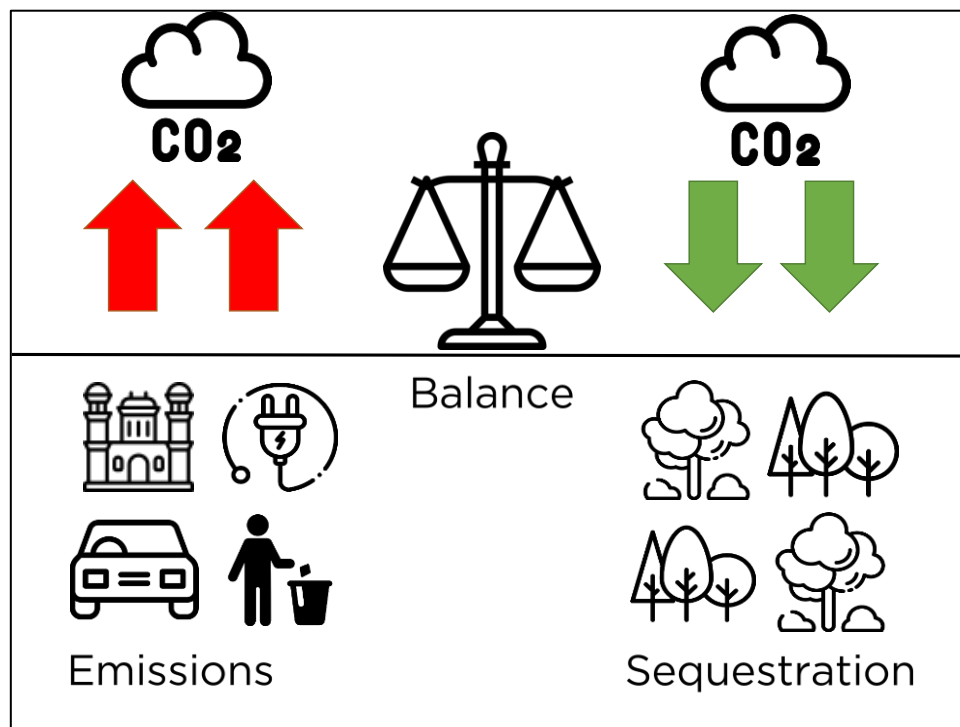
3. Background

- 3.1 In a drive towards a low carbon economy, the Scottish Government set world leading Climate Change targets to reduce Scotland's carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, with an interim reduction of 42% by 2020. In 2014 this interim target was met and exceeded (45.8%), originally leading to a new target set for a reduction of 50% for 2020. These targets presented Scotland with significant social and economic opportunities, as well as challenges, and required a range of actions across society and the economy. The [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#), which details these targets, is regarded as one of the most ambitious Climate Change legislation anywhere in the world.
- 3.2 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places duties on all public bodies to contribute to emission reduction targets, deliver programmes to increase resilience against Climate Change, and to act in a 'Sustainable' way. Under the act, the Council is identified as a Major Player due to its size and influence and therefore must submit a mandatory Climate Change report to Scottish Government (SG) on an annual basis, detailing the actions planned to reduce our environmental impacts. This Strategy will be underpinned by a suite of actions which will support delivery and allow for more effective reporting.
- 3.3 In Scotland's latest climate plan - '[Climate Change Plan: third report on proposals and policies 2018-2032 \(RPP3\)](#)', further expectations are placed on the public sector to increasingly demonstrate how its own operations are driving down emissions.

RPP3 sets out the path to a low carbon economy while helping to deliver sustainable economic growth and secure the wider benefits to a greener, fairer and healthier Scotland in 2032. Since the publication of RPP3, a Climate Emergency has been announced by Scotland’s First Minister, followed by the [‘Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019’](#) which details new emission reduction targets for Scotland nationally. These are:

- 56% reduction by 2020 (replacing the original 50% target);
- 75% reduction by 2030;
- 90% reduction by 2040; and
- net zero emissions by 2045.

3.4 Net zero refers to achieving an overall balance between emissions produced and emissions taken out of the atmosphere. Simply, this means that for all the emissions produced there must be mitigating actions in place to remove the same level of emissions from the atmosphere. Net zero does not mean that there should be no emissions, just that they must be balanced through emission reduction interventions. This is illustrated in the diagram below. The interventions range from land-use change methods, tree-planting, peatland restoration, investing in carbon-offsetting charities, technical solutions that draw carbon from the air, or Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage.



4. Main Issues

4.1 To contribute towards meeting these targets nationally, the Council have developed a new ‘Climate Change Strategy’ (Appendix 1) as a route map for 2021-22 and beyond. Our vision is an overarching Strategy that will set the foundation for a plan

of action and response to Scotland's Climate Emergency and 2045 net zero carbon reduction target.

4.2 The Strategy is influenced by three key principles, as detailed in the act. These are:

- **Mitigation** - Contribute to emissions reduction targets directly, and indirectly through wider functions such as energy improvements, waste reduction and reduced vehicle emissions.
- **Adaptation** - Deliver programmes for (preparedness) by planning to continue function and increase resilience against the impacts of Climate Change, such as engaging with Climate Ready Clyde and considering impacts of current decisions/ investments over future decades.
- **Sustainability** - Consider social, economic and environmental impact of all activities, policy decisions and Strategy. This includes integrating environmental requirements and targets into all our operations where feasible.

4.3 A long-term 2045 net zero emissions reduction target has been set for the Council. This has been developed in a way that mirrors the emission reduction trajectory set by Scottish Government for Scotland in light of the Climate Emergency. Since Scottish Government is using a baseline of 1990 and the Council is using a baseline of 2012/13 (our first full year of data), our starting points are significantly different. Therefore, we have instead devised an approach whereby we are attempting to match their level of ambition (as shown in the graph below) and have a parallel pathway to net zero despite the different starting points.

4.4 As of 2018-19 (the most recent full set of data at time of writing the Strategy), the Council has reduced our emissions by 20.3% against our 2012-13 baseline.

4.5 Therefore, in order to achieve net zero by 2045 in line with national interim targets set by Scottish Government, the Council will adopt the following:

- An interim target of 61% reduction (versus 2012/13 baseline) required by 2030/31 financial year;
- An interim target of 87% reduction (versus 2012/13 baseline) required by 2040/41 financial year; and
- Net zero by end of 2045/46 financial year.

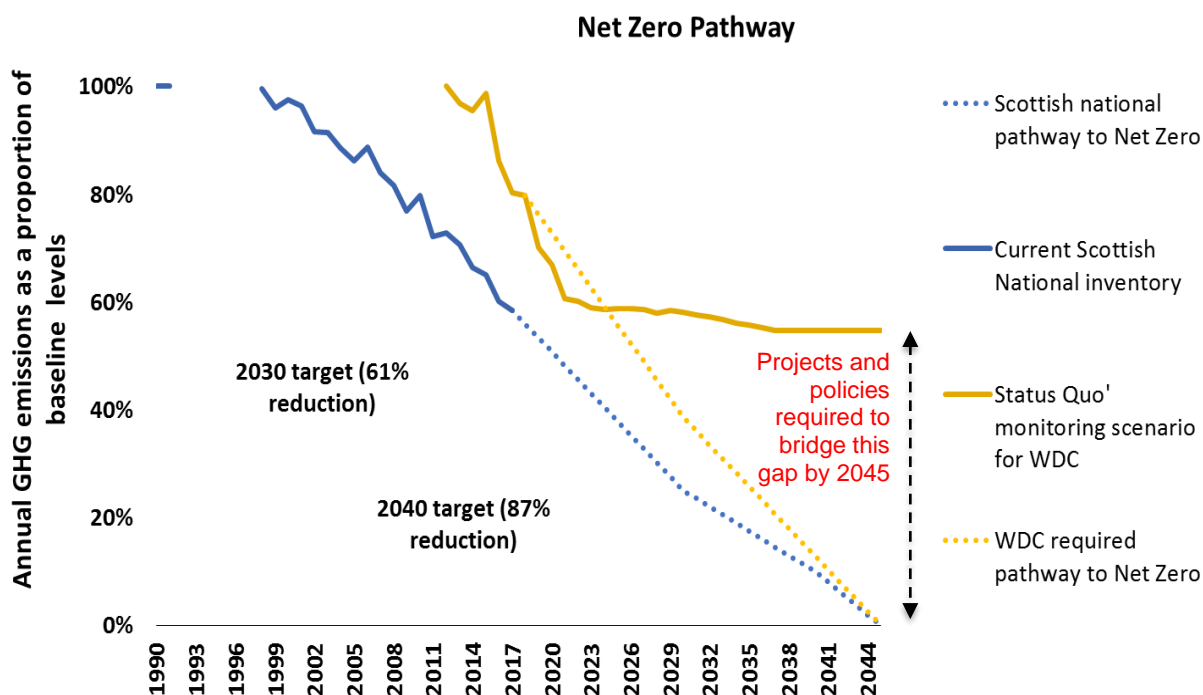
4.6 On an annual basis the Council will therefore be required to:

- Achieve a 3.5% annual reduction (versus 2012/13 baseline) every year up until 2030/31; and
- Achieve a 2.6% annual reduction (versus 2012/13 baseline) every year after 2030/31 (out to 2045/46).

The following chart shows this is approximately in line with the level of ambition proposed by the Scottish Government (green pathway¹) in the most recent update to the Climate Change Act. The purple line illustrates a 'Status Quo' scenario if the

¹ NAEI (2019); Chris Evans et al. (2019) Implementation of an Emissions Inventory for UK Peatlands; CCC analysis

Council were to do nothing from 2020 onwards, with emission levels decreasing slightly due to the decarbonisation of the electricity grid.



4.7 We have identified 9 distinct themes which form the basis of the Strategy to address Climate Change. These themes apply to both Council operations and the Local Authority area. These themes will be supported by a range of actions and will be reviewed and reported on an annual basis via the Council's risk and performance tool - Pentana, which provides a coherent plan for delivery of the aspiration to reduce our environmental impacts, and contribution to Climate Change. These priority themes and supporting actions are cross cutting and are the responsibility of all Council services.

4.8 Each theme has mandatory national and international policy drivers that help drive change and solidify responsibility for the Council and it's services. The themes help provide a visual structure to the Strategy and have been identified as:

- Energy, Water & Assets;
- Housing;
- Waste & Circular Economy;
- Sustainable Travel;
- Sustainable Procurement;
- Biodiversity, Landscape & Greenspace;
- Climate Impacts, Risk & Adaptation;
- Schools & Education; and
- Communities & Health

4.9 This Strategy currently focusses on our operational emissions, adaptation activities and wider engagement with the staff and public on environmental challenges. It is

essential that all management and staff play their part in taking forward, whilst also reviewing, developing and implementing new actions as issues emerge. With this in mind, we will amend and evolve the Strategy to reflect ongoing changes in wider Climate Change policy and technological innovations.

- 4.10** The Strategy and action plan (when developed) will be reviewed annually and progress on actions may be altered with more numerical targets being added if necessary. Every 5 years it will go through a full progress review and then an updated Strategy will be published as a result.
- 4.11** Successful implementation of the Climate Change Strategy will require internal governance at both strategic and operational levels. To ensure that this Strategy is delivered effectively, a new Climate Change Action Group (CCAG) has been launched involving senior management from each Council service area, ensuring shared responsibility of climate targets and objectives for their own service areas.
- 4.12** The CCAG will be accountable for the operational delivery of the Strategy and eventual action plan (to be developed). This group will measure progress by each service and will ensure Climate Change targets and objectives are being met. These will be measured annually through our internal performance system to ensure ownership, and to mainstream Climate Change across service areas.
- 4.13** Actions will each be developed, agreed then allocated to their relevant service areas, with the CCAG assessing the feasibility of delivering such action(s); the agreement of timelines for their delivery, and the operational details of achieving the action(s). This will be a continually evolving process.
- 4.14** An action plan will be developed and put to Council when the SEA process is complete. This is estimated to be ready by summer 2021. An example spreadsheet of high-level actions can be found in Appendix 4.
- 4.15** The action plan will require a full scoping exercise for SEA, with relevant actions being selected to go through SEA when they are identified.
- 4.16** The role of the Sustainability Team is to coordinate, stimulate and motivate Climate Change action for the Council, with service areas having to plan, implement and deliver actions as they best understand how their areas work. This is key to effective ownership of Climate Change action and in insuring that Climate Change is mainstreamed in what they do over time.
- 4.17** The first CCAG was held on the 25th of August 2020 and provided an initial introduction to the groups' function and what will be required from service areas to deliver on Climate Change targets and actions. It is essential that each service area is represented at these meetings and we encourage senior management to attend where possible or if not, send a representative in their place.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** Sustainability Officer time in championing delivery of the Climate Change Strategy and Climate Change actions as agreed by the CCAG.

5.2 Requirement for Council wide engagement and uptake, with staff at all levels across all service areas, in order to mainstream Climate Change practices in what we do.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 To deliver the action plan, external advisory support will be procured to carry out the scoping and SEA of high-level Climate Change actions; to deliver a workshop with service areas; and to support the Sustainability Officer in developing the action plan.

6.2 In order to ensure that the Council realistically meets its 2045 net zero emissions target, it will require further internal funding (capital and revenue) and support from all service areas, ensuring that before any project and/or procurement activity we are including Climate Change targets. Including (but not limited to) decarbonising our supply chain, reducing domestic waste levels, going beyond existing energy efficiency measures, and ensuring that retrofit or new builds are of the highest energy efficiency and sustainability standard.

6.3 Various types of funding (including full and 50% match funding) for a range of Climate Change projects and activities are currently available from Scottish Government, and will be made available over the coming years. Corporately the finance budget needs to be made available to achieve targets and actions, and all service areas must take responsibility to ensure that available funding is applied for where applicable. This would ensure that the Council takes advantage of additional funding streams, therefore reducing stress on Council budgets.

6.4 More consideration must be taken of the Whole-Life Cost of our actions, with more emphasis placed on the long term savings made from reducing energy billing costs (and therefore carbon emissions charges) from energy efficiency improvements in buildings, and the savings made from sourcing Sustainable and good quality materials, products and services. Initial cheaper costs may not always have the best outcome in the long term. All service areas have the responsibility of analysing the Whole-Life Cost of their actions or projects to ensure best value is achieved for Sustainability, cost and savings.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 There is a risk of the Council not being prepared for the inevitable impacts of Climate Change now and in the future. This includes the increased frequency and intensity of flooding events and heat waves.

7.2 There is a potential for reputational risk if the Council does not take required action to deliver on Mitigation, Adaptation and Sustainability measures as per the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. It is already mandatory for the Council to report on our Climate Change activities to Scottish Government on an annual basis. Therefore it is essential that we demonstrate progress in this regard.

7.3 For now, there are currently no legal ramifications of being non-compliant with our responsibilities under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. However, the Council must remain aware of any future developments in this area.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** The Climate Change Strategy is intended to work towards positive engagement with all equality groups and the wider community, via partnerships, empowerment and engagement within and outside West Dunbartonshire. The continued review of the Climate Change Strategy will allow us to improve the document with regards to green recovery and Equality Duty needs.

The assessment notes potential positive impacts for a range of groups and for Human Rights, especially in terms of increasing engagement, participation and empowerment. The Strategy will encourage positive engagement with a full range of groups in West Dunbartonshire. This supports our Equality Outcomes on increasing participation.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** A public consultation on Climate Change was carried out via an online survey, receiving a total of 339 responses (Appendix 5). Overall, the public are concerned about Climate Change and want to engage and support the Council in reducing our environmental impacts and preparing for the inevitable impacts Climate Change. Responses will be used to inform action plans for service areas within the CCAG.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** This Strategy has been reviewed for its environmental impacts by going through a pre-screening process for SEA. Results of the pre-screening assessment confirms that a full SEA is not required for this Strategy.

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28 October 2020

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Climate Change Strategy

Appendix 2 – Carbon Footprint & Organisational Boundary
Appendix 3 - Energy - Water – Renewables Analysis.
Appendix 4 – Example High-Level Actions
Appendix 5 - References & Further Reading
Appendix 6 – Climate Change Survey
Appendix 7 – Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) Report

Background Papers:

[Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#)
[Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)
[Climate Change Plan: third report on proposals and policies 2018-2032 \(RPP3\)](#)
[Climate Ready Scotland: Climate Change adaptation programme 2019-2024](#)

Wards Affected:

All