

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver's coat of arms. The crest includes a crown with four maple leaves, a shield divided into four quadrants (top-left: a ship, top-right: a stag, bottom-left: a ship, bottom-right: a grizzly bear), and a banner at the bottom with the motto 'A NE FOR A'.

## **Agenda Item 7**

# **Climate Emergency Update**

**Falkirk Council**

**Title:** Climate Emergency update  
**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 15 June 2021  
**Author:** Director of Development Services

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 At its meeting in August 2019, the Executive agreed that the Council should declare a Climate Emergency and commence work on an action plan to meet a 'net zero' carbon reduction target for its operations by 2030. Since this declaration, various actions have been implemented to achieve the targets set, and progress towards future targets. This report provides an update on the work undertaken to date and seeks agreement in relation to the further actions stated.
- 1.2 The report outlines work currently ongoing in terms of:
- Council of the Future Workstreams
  - Climate Change Action Cross Party Working Group
  - Carbon budgeting requirements
  - Carbon literacy knowledge
  - Carbon sequestration requirements
- 1.3 The report presents an initial programme of measures proposed to be taken forward to help expand and coordinate actions to tackle the climate emergency.

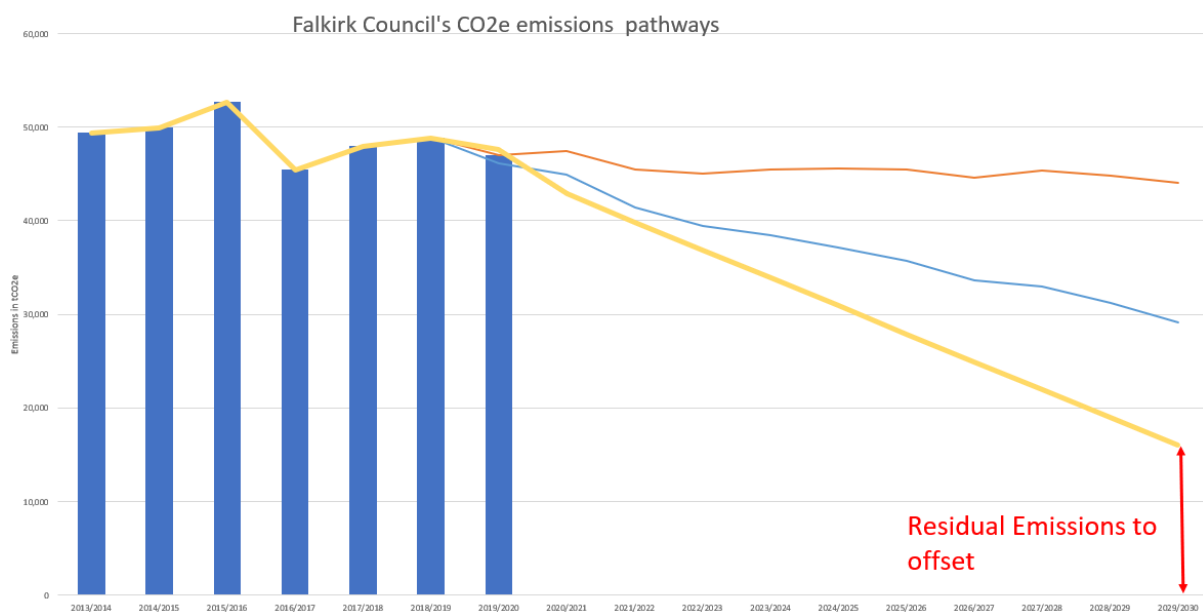
**2. Recommendations**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Executive:**

- (1) notes the progress being made on the Council's response to the climate emergency.**
- (2) agrees the initial Climate Change Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 as a means to embed climate change obligations within the Council.**
- (3) agrees the plan of work proposed in relation to carbon sequestration and carbon budgeting.**
- (4) notes that a programme of carbon literacy training has commenced and agrees that this be extended at a cost of £8,400 for elected members and staff with the aim of achieving a minimum of Gold standard for the Council.**
- (5) agrees that a post of Energy and Climate Change Co-ordinator is created to ensure the above recommendations are progressed effectively and delivered at pace.**

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Falkirk Council has recently undergone an extensive analysis of new legislative targets on the reduction of its carbon emissions and how these apply to Council service delivery. The Council is obliged to meet the national target of net zero by 2045 for all emissions to comply with the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 and has set an ambitious target for the Council to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.
- 3.2 In 2019, the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 was updated to reflect the increase in carbon reduction commitments from the Scottish Government and its intentions were reinforced in the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019. In December 2020, a new Climate Change Plan was issued by the Scottish Government detailing how it anticipates each sector should achieve these targets.
- 3.3 The following graph shows the Council's current carbon 'footprint' (blue bars) against both the national target for 2045 (blue line) and the organisation target for 2030 (yellow line) with business as usual/no change (orange line) in levels of carbon abatement. By 2030, the Council's commitments suggest that the yellow line should reach zero and the blue line should reach where the yellow line currently stops (75%tCO<sub>2</sub>e reduction).



Graph 1: Falkirk Council's projected abatement target.

- 3.4 As can be seen, neither line falls upon its designated target. As such, the red arrow depicts the amount of carbon emissions remaining which the Council will need to offset by whatever means possible, e.g. planting trees or installing green roof/walls. This approach is called carbon sequestration.
- 3.5 The challenge for the Council is to sustain a series of measures to help reduce carbon emissions beyond the profile suggested in the graph and to introduce a carbon sequestration programme to address the residual emissions.

## **4 Climate Emergency Update**

### **Council of the Future**

- 4.1 Climate change is one of the top 10 priority projects for the Council in its Corporate Plan. This aims to achieve a 'One Council' approach to address the climate emergency, adapt to a changing climate and de-carbonise as far as possible to achieve the emissions reduction targets. To achieve this, the Plan recognises the need for large scale transformation at pace.
- 4.2 There is currently a gap in the number and scale of potential projects to enable services to meet the statutory target. It is therefore important that climate change is incorporated into all strategies/plans/projects going forward, requiring a change in mindset, processes, resources and decision making within the Council. This should allow the organisation to plan and deliver action against these targets.
- 4.3 Through the Council of the Future Climate Change project, 5 main outcomes have been identified which will ensure Climate Change obligations are embedded throughout Council service delivery:
- To communicate the emission reduction targets across all Council services.
  - To facilitate projects within service areas which will help achieve national and local targets.
  - To scale up the project register reflective of all projects within the Council that can contribute to emission reduction targets.
  - To have oversight of all corporate strategies, decisions and projects to embed climate change action within them
  - To quantify potential gaps in achieving statutory targets and formulate a Carbon Sequestration Action Plan.
- 4.4 Progress on each of these actions will be monitored and reported within the governance mechanisms established through the Council of the Future process.

### **Climate Change Action Stakeholder Working Group (CCASWG)**

- 4.5 In January 2020, the Executive approved the establishment of a Climate Change Actions Stakeholder Working Group (CCASWG) with a remit which includes prioritising actions to be taken by the Council in response to the climate emergency declaration with the aim of achieving net zero emissions by 2030.
- 4.6 This group involves representation from each of the main political parties within the Council, as well as senior officer representation, including the Chief Executive.
- 4.7 The CCASWG meets on a monthly basis, with every alternate meeting looking at organisational and area wide priorities respectively. When considering area

wide priorities, representation includes pupils from local High Schools to encourage community stakeholder engagement and incorporate the views of young people in the development of the action plan.

- 4.8 Outputs from the CCASWG will help to develop the Climate Emergency Action Plan, identifying a further series of measures for the Council to progress to address the climate emergency relating to Falkirk as an area.

### **Carbon Literacy Training**

- 4.9 In January 2020 the Executive noted the considerations set out in a report on future actions which would contribute to addressing the climate emergency. One of these actions was to consider a carbon literacy training programme for Elected Members and senior officers with the aim of becoming climate leaders/champions.
- 4.10 The training is delivered by Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB), an accredited provider, and will enable the Council to achieve Carbon Literate accreditation status (ranging from Bronze to Platinum dependant on the proportion of employees to achieve accreditation). Carbon literacy training will support the development of measures which will enable a reduction in the Council's organisational and area-wide emissions as well as help to facilitate the delivery of other outcomes synonymous with the Council's priority to embed action on climate change.
- 4.11 In March 2021 the CCASWG began the first round of training as members of the first cohort. Subsequent rounds of training dates are proposed and the CCASWG are in the process of engaging attendees for these next rounds. It is hoped that all Elected Members and senior management teams within each service (60 people in total) will have completed this training by October this year. This will enable the Council to achieve a Silver accreditation. Thereafter it is proposed that the roll out of further training to the majority of staff be carried out, with the ambition of achieving the Gold level award, which has a requirement for more than 50% of the workforce to be carbon literate.

### **Carbon Budgeting**

- 4.12 The Conference of Parties (COP21) Paris Agreement, to which the UK and Scotland subscribe, came into effect on 4 November 2016 and binds nations to hold global temperature rise by 2050 to under 2°C. The UK and Scottish Governments both have passed legislation addressing the objectives of reducing carbon emissions and have signed up to the COP21 Agreement. The Paris accord aims to avoid the most detrimental outcomes of climate change and set a target of limiting the global temperature increase to well below 2°. In the Paris Agreement each 'agent', i.e. a country, government, local authority or individual was advised of a limit of emissions which they could emit each year whilst keeping us below that 2°C limit. This figure is called a 'carbon budget'.

- 4.13 In accordance with this, the Scottish Government set ambitious targets of achieving net zero by 2045 with an interim reduction of 75% by 2030. Carbon budgeting is a method to plan and manage emission reductions across an organisation. The carbon budget allocates an allowance of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) emissions annually for each Service area across the Council. Services will then aim to keep within their allocated carbon budget over the financial year allowing the Council to better manage how it works towards meeting its emission reduction targets. This approach will also assist in the implementation of the Council's Property Strategy, agreed at its May 2021 meeting, whereby the carbon reduction effects of investment or rationalisation can be considered in future decision-making. The carbon budget will relate to Falkirk Council's own emissions only and not to the wider community or business emissions in the area.
- 4.14 The implementation of carbon budgeting Council wide creates an organisational mechanism for monitoring and reporting progress toward national and organisational targets. To progress this approach, work will be undertaken by external advisers to identify appropriate techniques and budgets to be applied by Services across the Council.

### **Carbon Sequestration**

- 4.15 As was outlined in the graph in para. 3.3, it is unlikely that the Council will be able to achieve net zero for its own organisational emissions and as such will be required to sequester carbon from the atmosphere. An initial study on this topic was instructed under direction from the CCASWG to quantify the land required to successfully meet the Council's targets to achieve a 75% reduction on emissions by 2030.
- 4.16 The following were key findings from this study:
- Falkirk Council owns an area of approximately 3,600ha
  - This land currently sequesters an estimated 4,628 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per annum.
  - 1,648 ha (46% of Council owned land) is considered most suitable for change.
  - Conversion to habitats of higher carbon sequestration value could eventually sequester an additional 4,082 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per annum.

**Table 1: Falkirk Council's sequestration potential:**

<b><i>Falkirk Council Sequestration potential</i></b>	<b><i>tCO2e per annum</i></b>
Carbon sequestration target	13,000
Carbon sequestration value	4,628
Sequestration through habitat change	4,082
Total potential sequestration value	8,710

- If the council were able to achieve the total potential sequestration value of these assets, it would still have a shortfall of around 4,000 tCO2e (13,000 – 8,710).
- Changing the habitat of a larger area would have unacceptable adverse impacts on biodiversity.

4.17 The next steps in progressing sequestration will be to prepare a more in-depth study of land use and potential land use change which will help to identify Council land assets suitable for sequestration proposals. This will help to close data gaps and develop a schedule of works in terms of sequestration infrastructure. The outcomes of this are expected later this year.

## **5 Climate Change Action Plan**

- 5.1 The Council's commitment to achieving its organisational target of net zero was set out in its Climate Emergency Declaration made in 2019. An initial action programme has been prepared as part of the Council of the Future Climate Change project work. However to support this declaration, the CCASWG will prepare a fuller action plan later this year. The initial action programme sets milestones for Services to incorporate climate change into all strategies, plans and projects going forwards. This will help to give climate change priority alongside other considerations when formal decisions are made by the Council.
- 5.2 The initial actions identified as part of the Council of the Future work have been approved by the cross-party Climate Change Action Stakeholder Working Group, and the Corporate Sustainability Working Group. Further the recommendations and actions will be developed over the course of this year to establish a full climate change action plan.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 Engagement work is ongoing both within the organisation and with external community partners. Climate change officers are working closely with the

community planning partnership and through Council of the Future project work to build climate change obligations into all areas of service delivery.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

There are significant financial, legal and resource implications for Falkirk Council associated with meeting climate change obligations and targets, not least the penalties that could be applied for failure to meet set targets, or failure to prepare to meet these. There are likely premiums to be faced if there is failure to manage energy effectively. Global warming and climatic changes are likely to result in more extreme weather conditions such as flooding being experienced that can impact our infrastructure resulting in costly interventions.

An initial assessment of existing Council activity relating to climate change has estimated that the Council will expend c£117m on actions relating to climate change. Additional capital funding has been made available in the current programme to address energy inefficiencies (£10.5m) and green fleet (£650k). In addition, £100k of revenue funding was provided in 2021/2 to aid the development of this policy and to progress local initiatives including 20 minute neighbourhoods and graduate support. The carbon literacy training can be delivered at a cost of £8400, to be sourced from existing budgets. Inevitably, this is only a small proportion of what is required to help achieve the Council's carbon reduction targets and therefore further work will be necessary to establish the business case for net zero carbon reduction.

### **7.2 Resources**

In order to take a 'one Council' approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation, there will be a need for commitment of officer resources across the organisation. Work is taking place to review and where possible recruit additional staff to enhance capacity to carry out the rapidly increasing workload of the team. Additional graduate support is being engaged by the team and it is proposed to create an Energy & Climate Change Coordinator position within the Service to help progress this work. In addition, the carbon literacy training will enhance the capacities available across the Council to develop and implement action within these remits.

### **7.3 Legal**

Failure to meet statutory targets may, in time, present legal implications for the Council should there be a failure to prepare or mitigate against the worst consequences of a changing climate, such as the effects of extreme weather or poor air quality.



## **7.4 Risk**

There can be reputational and financial risk with regard to anticipated costs associated with failing to tackle climate change. This includes costs of e.g.

- retrofitting projects to address climate change obligations post development,
- paying higher premiums for service delivery if climate change obligations are not embedded
- higher fuel costs if failing to adapt timeously to new sources of renewable fuel (e.g. electric vehicles).

Failure to show leadership in climate mitigation will risk reputational damage both locally but also nationally. There is a significant risk that the Council will not deliver on its net zero carbon target by 2030 and for all emissions by 2045. Work to further develop the Climate Change and Sustainability Risk Register will be undertaken by September 2021. There is a need for a completed and measurable Climate Emergency Action Plan with a clear set of projects and budgets. Given the Council's budget pressures there are also risks over the sufficiency of resources to deliver on these targets.

A paper will be prepared for Scrutiny Committee later this year to examine these risks further, providing a 'deep dive' into this topic to explore and address the risks relating to the achievement of the Council's targets.

## **7.5 Equalities**

An EPIA will be undertaken as part of the Council of the Future project work being undertaken.

## **7.6 Sustainability/Environmental Impact:**

The work summarised in this report and the proposed action plan will aid the Council's delivery of its commitment to achieving a net zero reduction in its carbon emissions. The initial action plan (attached) includes proposals that all future reports to Executive contain a fuller assessment of the sustainability and environmental benefits of the proposal and training will be put under way with staff to enable these assessments to be prepared.

## **7.7 Council of The Future**

As noted under section 4.1, climate change is one of the 10 priority projects within the Council of the Future initiative. Elected Members will receive a report that considers the project as part of the Council of the Future governance arrangement. The report will include details of the full scope of the project, key milestones, expected outcomes and financial implications.

## **8. Conclusions**

- 8.1 The Council is progressing work to help deliver on its declaration of a climate emergency and to help deliver a reduction in its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. The initial action plan attached to this report is an important step forward in delivering towards this objective.
- 8.2 Carbon literacy is a key area in ensuring that commitment and understanding of climate change issues is embedded throughout the entire Council organisation. The programme of carbon literacy training will assist the Council in achieving this objective and, by achieving a gold level accreditation, will ensure that the capacity to deliver on this objective is enhanced.
- 8.3 Carbon budgeting is a significant tool for the Council to allow greater control of its carbon footprint through more cognisance of climate change and its effects on the capital and revenue budget setting processes. It will require officers across all Services to increase their focus on climate change and carbon emission reductions.
- 8.4 There is a significant shortfall in the amount of carbon sequestration capacities available to the Council to offset its residual carbon emissions. Further study and investigation is required into how sequestration can be maximised. At the same time further review is required of how to cut emissions in order to lessen this residual amount which requires to be sequestered.
- 8.5 Work will be undertaken to establish the appropriate methodology to implement carbon budgeting for the Council as well as a second phase of sequestration. Building on the initial action programme attached, the development of a Climate Emergency Action Plan will help to map out the actions the Council must take for decarbonisation and to tackle the climate emergency. Papers will follow to the Executive where appropriate on these topics and the CCASWG and the CSWG will continue to monitor and develop proposals for mitigation, adaptation and sequestration in line with the agreed targets.

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**Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Initial Climate Change Action Programme

**List of Background Papers:**

Climate Change files

## Climate Change Action Plan – Initial programme

	Engagement Tasks –	Timescale	Action By	Outcome	Resource
ENG 1	Appoint Climate Change Graduate to assist with meeting Climate Change milestones.	June '21	Building Design Manager/ Climate Change Officer	Engaged Services/ Officers and Elected Members with greater carbon literacy.	Existing Revenue Budget
ENG 2	Adapt Council policies to ensure these acknowledge the imperative of a just transition to carbon reduction and net zero.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Council staff</li> <li>Elected members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbon Literacy improvements</li> <li>Reduced carbon footprint and leading towards net zero targets.</li> <li>Reduced energy use/ carbon emissions from operational buildings</li> </ul>	Existing revenue budget and capital programme.
	Create a collegiate approach to this work via the CoTF Climate Change project, involving the Community Participation Team in this endeavour	Ongoing			
	Adapt budgeting and capital bid processes to take account of the requirement to reduce carbon.	Ongoing			
	Implement findings of SPR and newly adopted Property Strategy to aid carbon reduction in property estate.	Ongoing			
	Building Capacity Tasks –	Timescale	Action By	Outcome	Resource
BC 1	Vehicle Replacement Programme Review. Initiation of phasing out of diesel vehicles, replacing these with electric or hydrogen operated/powered vehicles.	2021 - 2026	Fleet Services All Council Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in EV stock (pool vehicles)</li> <li>Enhancing potential for reduced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£600k Capital Funding in 21-22</li> <li>£8m VRP/ 5 yrs</li> </ul>
	Future Provision – a proportion of the 5 Yr replacement programme will be allocated to				

	Electric Vehicle replacement, with some investment flowing from the potential LZC (Low and Zero Carbon) grant support Investment Zone sustainable transport initiatives .			carbon emissions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced carbon footprint and leading towards net zero targets.</li> </ul>	
BC 2	Introduce Sustainable Transport	By June '21/ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Council Services</li> <li>• Development Services Fleet Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an expected 97 EV charging points in the Council area by June 21</li> <li>• and an ongoing future programme of installation of EV charging points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £2.5m EV chargepoint funding</li> <li>• chargepoint Scotland funding</li> </ul>

BC 3	Introduce Sustainable and active travel :-  Cycling, walking and bus infrastructure initiatives	April '21 to March '26	Development Services	Potential for reduced carbon footprint and leading towards net zero targets.	£2.5m capital funding but with potential for matched Sustrans funding.  Also potential for funding from Bus Partnership Fund bid.
	<b>Works Tasks –</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Action By</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Resource</b>
WK 1	Improving Energy Efficiency and installing low carbon heating in non-residential operational buildings.- £13m	April 2021 – March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Services Assets/Building Design/Planning Units</li> </ul>	Reduced carbon footprint and leading towards net zero targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£10.5m Capital Investment/ 5 yrs</li> <li>Potential LZC grant funding</li> <li>Existing Revenue Budget £2.5m - £3m (assumes use of SALIX loan opportunity)</li> </ul>
WK 2	Improving Energy Efficiency and installing low carbon heating in residential housing 5 year Housing Investment Programme including:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>window/door and heating replacement plus renewables),</li> <li>a proportion of external fabric works which contribute to insulation improvement</li> </ul>	April 21 – March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate and Housing Services</li> <li>Development Services Building Design Unit</li> <li>Development Services Planning Unit</li> </ul>	Reduced carbon footprint and leading towards net zero target.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£96m Capital investment/ 5 yrs</li> </ul>

WK 3	Replacement of street lights with LED lanterns.	By March '22	Development Services	Reduced energy consumption.	£1.4m capital funding
WK 4	Implement Forest Estate and Urban Woodlands – planting of c 40,000 new trees	April 21/ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Council Services</li> <li>• Development Services Planning and Environment Unit</li> </ul>	Sequestration of carbon dioxide emissions.	£1.5m (external)