

ANGUS COUNCIL - 7 NOVEMBER 2024

PUBLIC BODIES' CLIMATE CHANGE DUTIES: ANGUS COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

REPORT BY ALISON SMITH, DIRECTOR OF VIBRANT COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

1. ABSTRACT

This report provides an overview of the Council's compliance with its climate change duties for the 2023/24 period. The report also provides an update on the progress made in relation to the Council's measures to improve performance relating to sustainability and climate change and seeks agreement to submit the report to Scottish Government.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

The Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Reporting contributes to the following priorities in the Angus Council Plan 2023-2028 (2024 Update).

Caring for our Place

- Take action to mitigate against climate change by delivering our Transition to Net Zero Action Plan: 2022 to 2030.
- Reduce our energy use through a reduction in our property estate coupled with good management to reduce wasting energy.
- Deliver efficient waste services and encourage more recycling.
- Enhance and restore Angus Biodiversity, corporately and with a range of stakeholders.

Angus Council is Efficient and Effective:

- Continue to develop and deliver our change programme.
- Deliver our statutory obligations and core functions, tailored to suit our available resources and making best use of our data/performance information.

3. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) Approves the contents of this report in accordance with the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020;
- (ii) Agrees the content of the report (Appendix 1) for submission to the Scottish Government and notes the progress that the Council has made in embedding climate change and sustainability into its policy and operations; and
- (iii) Approves the annual production of a Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report summary report (Appendix 2) to be housed on the Angus Council website and used for wider communication purposes.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council has statutory duties under Section 44 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to contribute to reducing Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions; to contribute to helping Scotland adapt to a changing climate; and to act in the way that it considers most sustainable. The Act gave the Scottish Ministers powers to require public bodies to report on their compliance with

these duties, using a standardised excel template to ensure consistency between bodies and over time.

- 4.2 The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) Scotland) Order 2015 officially commenced the mandatory annual reporting on compliance with climate change. The Council submitted its first mandatory report in November 2016, covering the period 2015/16. In response to the global climate emergency, the Order was amended in 2020 to include additional questions with effect from 1st April 2021. The report must include the Council's emissions reduction targets to demonstrate how it is contributing to Scotland's emissions reduction targets; how the Council is aligning spending plans and use of resources to contribute to reducing emissions and delivering emission reduction targets; and how the Council will publish its progress towards achieving its emission reduction targets.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 The report template covers the following mandatory topics: profile of reporting body; governance, management, and strategy; emissions, targets, and project data; adaptation; procurement; validation and declaration. Recommended topics relating to wider influence across the Council area are wider impact and influence on greenhouse gas emissions and other notable reportable activity. The report is largely retrospective, scrutinising performance over the period 2023/24.

A summary of seven key areas scrutinised in the report is provided below, outlining the main strengths and weaknesses of the Council's work:

Governance, management, and strategy

- 5.2 This section includes an outline of how the Transition to Net Zero Working Group and subgroups operate, and how climate change action is managed and embedded within the Council. It contains a comprehensive list of policy documents and action plans further showing how Services and officers are working to embed climate change considerations.
- 5.3 Also covered are findings of a corporate self-assessment carried out in June 2019 which examined how prepared Angus Council was to meet national climate change targets and identified strengths and areas for improvement.

Emissions, targets, and projects

- 5.4 From the financial years 2022/23 to 2023/24, the Council reduced its emissions by 4.6%. From the baseline year of 2012/13 to this current reporting year 2023/24, the Council's carbon emissions have reduced by 60%. The baseline year was originally 2010/11, but 2012/13 was when the full CO₂e emissions data set became available and is the most accurate baseline to measure against.

Scope 1 emissions:

- 5.5 These are direct fuel combustion emissions from sources the Council own or control – emissions from buildings (gas, oil, LPG, and biomass) and diesel for fleet vehicles. From the financial years 2022/23 to 2023/24, the Council reduced its scope 1 emissions by 8.1%. Since 2012/13 scope 1 emissions have reduced by 29.7%.

Scope 2 emissions:

- 5.6 These are indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity that is consumed in Council owned or controlled operations – emissions from buildings, streetlighting and other infrastructure. From the financial years 2022/23 to 2023/24, the Council's scope 2 emissions increased by 3.3%. This was due to the increase in carbon emissions from the electricity grid; the UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy stated that this was 'due to an increase in natural gas use in electricity generation and a decrease in renewable generation'. Since 2012/13 scope 2 emissions have reduced by 68.8%.

Scope 3 emissions:

- 5.7 These are indirect emissions from the value chain, upstream and downstream activities – emissions from business travel, homeworking, waste disposal, recycling, composting, anaerobic digestion, and emissions resulting from the transportation and distribution of electricity and water.

From the financial years 2022/23 to 2023/24, the Council reduced its scope 3 emissions by 5.4%. Since 2012/13 scope 3 emissions have reduced by 80.9%.

- 5.8 Operational emission reduction targets were added to the report submission in line with the Council's - Transition to Net Zero Action Plan 2022 to 2030. The Council's operational emission reduction targets were set inline within the Scottish Government targets of a 75% reduction by 2030, a 90% reduction by 2040 and Net Zero by 2045. During April 2024, the Scottish Government conceded its 2030 target of a 75% reduction in emissions as it was deemed 'out of reach'. This was in reaction to the Climate Change Committee stating that 'Scotland's 2030 climate goals are no longer credible' due to the lack of a comprehensive strategy for Scotland to decarbonise towards Net Zero. For the time being, the Council will still strive to meet a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030, enroute to Net Zero by 2045, to maintain ambition and drive progress. This will be reviewed when the Scottish Government determine how the proposed replacement of the interim targets with carbon budget are to be implemented.
- 5.9 During 2023/24, LED lighting upgrades were completed at Arbroath Sports Centre and a number of Sheltered Housing complexes. Two large Solar Photovoltaic (PV) installations at Websters High School and Brechin Community Campus were completed and became operational also within this period.
- 5.10 Following the success of the installation of Solar PV & Battery storage within two Sheltered Housing Complexes in 2022/23, a further 4 sheltered complexes benefitted from similar works in 2023/24. These projects help provide some of our most vulnerable tenants with a significant percentage of their domestic electricity needs free-of-charge, helping to alleviate fuel poverty. Also associated with this work was the installation of efficient electric Quantum storage heating.
- 5.11 Property Assets and Capital Projects teams are looking to determine 'whole building' approaches and specific action plans for each that can be used to transition the Council's building stock towards Net Zero. The availability of resource to progress this work has impacted on progress in this area.
- 5.12 The Council's fleet vehicles continue to decarbonise. During 2023/24 three diesel cars were replaced with electric cars. The Council now only has three diesel cars and seven small diesel vans left to convert away from combustion engine by 2025, which is the target year for phasing out petrol and diesel cars and vans in the public sector fleet. There are some teams within the Council having issues with the use of electric vehicles due to the long distances they travel across Scotland. There is currently no formal Council Fleet Strategy to deal with issues that arise; the Council's Fleet Management and Driver Safety Group are currently developing a policy on the corporate approach to the decarbonisation of the Council's Fleet. However, an exact date for the publication of this policy is unknown.
- 5.13 In 2022, Angus Council had a household recycling rate of 51.7% and a carbon impact 104,113 tCO₂e, which was the tenth lowest carbon impact in Scotland. We had a landfill rate of 1.9% which was the third lowest in Scotland. In 2023 we recycled 61.2% of waste accepted at our recycling centres which was slightly down on the 2022 rate of 62.41%.

Adaptation

- 5.14 Climate Change Adaptation seeks to deliver actions that protect people and nature from the impacts of climate change. Considering adaptation across all sectors will help create climate resilient communities and ecosystems. Partnership working that facilitates adaptation in Angus is well developed and contributes to physical on the ground works, attracts national funding, facilitates knowledge sharing and supports business and communities to adapt.
- 5.15 In 2023/24, and as an example of the partnership working already underway, Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Perth & Kinross Council and Adaptation Scotland have been working together to set up a Tayside Adaption Partnership. This partnership will take a regional approach to identifying and adapting to climate change risk whilst supporting behaviour change and communications.
- 5.16 Partnership work to mitigate against urban, coastal, river and estuary flood management also continues via the Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin Local Flood Risk Management Plan and at Montrose Bay, via the Scottish Government's Dynamic Coast project.

- 5.17 Nature-based solutions, that address both the climate and biodiversity crises, continue to be developed and delivered at all scales across Angus. In 2023/24, in both rural and urban areas, the Council has continued to work with communities and wider stakeholders to deliver innovative approaches to nature and land management. Woodland expansion, natural flood management, grassland regeneration, wetland creation and green network connectivity projects have all contributed to action across the area. The Scottish Government Nature Restoration Fund has allowed the development of ambitious nature-based carbon sequestration projects from the uplands in the Angus Glens to Angus urban centres. An example of one of these projects is 'The River South Esk: A Climate Resilient & Nature Friendly Catchment' which was successful in securing largescale funding for its delivery phase in early 2024.
- 5.18 Action in 2023/24 continues to support ongoing policy delivery associated with climate change adaptation, such as the Local Development Plan 2016's policies on managing flood risk, water quality and greenspace enhancement. Currently work is underway to incorporate National Planning Framework 4 and the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy into future policy development and project delivery, including the development of the next Local Development Plan for Angus.
- 5.19 In 2023, a review of action progress in Angus in the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-26 was carried out. The monitoring undertaken for actions delivered between 2016 and 2023 illustrates that 75% of actions in the plan relevant to Angus, or 116 out of 155 actions, are in delivery or complete. Action led by over 90 stakeholders identified in Angus supports nature-based climate resilience in our rural and urban environments.

Procurement

- 5.20 Sustainable Procurement is recognised by both the Council and the Procurement & Commissioning Service as an important issue and is included in procurement documents where relevant & proportionate to do so. The Scottish Government regularly publish updated policy documents around this subject with these being actioned as appropriate.
- 5.21 Support for Sustainable Procurement has been strengthened as part of the new Procurement Standing Orders; a Community Benefits & Sustainability Officer was recruited in June 2024 and is currently developing processes and guidance to support services with the Sustainable Procurement Duty.

Validation

- 5.22 The report has been validated by the Transition to Net Zero Working Group.

Recommended reporting on area wide issues

- 5.23 In this section wider influence targets are detailed including: partnership working, other notable activity surrounding food & drink, biodiversity, water, active & sustainable travel and sustainability.
- 5.24 The Council controls only a small percentage of greenhouse gas emissions across the whole of the Council area; however, it can indirectly support and encourage change by working with Community Planning Partners and through delivery of the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP).
- 5.25 This Public Bodies Duty Report is a comprehensive technical report and requires to be submitted in the format as set by Scottish Government, which is included at Appendix 1. To make the content of the 2023/24 report accessible and useful for communities and partner agencies, a summarised version has been produced. The report will be available on the Council's Climate Change webpage and will include a link to the full report on the Scottish Government platform.

6. PROPOSALS

- 6.1 The Public Bodies Duty Report is a comprehensive technical report and requires to be submitted in the format as set by Scottish Government, which is included within Appendix 1. To make the content of the 2023/24 report accessible and useful for communities and partner agencies a summarised version has been produced (Appendix 2) as noted in paragraph 5.25 above. The summary report will be made available on the Council's Climate Change webpage and will include a link to the full report on the Scottish Government platform. It is proposed that both the

Scottish Government Submission contained within Appendix 1 and the Summary Report contained within Appendix 2 are approved by Council.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report, but the Council will need to invest in decarbonising its buildings, operations, fleet, and land to reach the previous Scottish Government 2030 target of a 75% reduction in emissions, enroute to the Net Zero target by 2045. These works will likely be of significant cost, require staff resource to progress and could prove challenging in the current financial climate.
- 7.2 The Net Zero one off investment fund of £0.75 million for investment in climate change, net zero and biodiversity projects and initiatives were approved by Committee in May 2023. This is a substantial fund and further demonstrates the Council's commitment to climate and nature. However, to meet the 2030 target, and beyond, significant levels of additional funding will be required to be provided on an annual basis.
- 7.3 There are various external funding streams and grants available, but they do not cover the full costs associated with achieving Net Zero. It is likely that many climate change, net zero and biodiversity projects and initiatives will have poor financial paybacks but high emission reductions and environmental gains; therefore, appropriate funding will need to be made available to allow these projects and initiatives to progress.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Climate Change is identified as a risk within the Corporate Risk Register. The submission of the annual Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report is a control/action within the Risk Register to help mitigate Climate Change.
- 8.2 Climate Change action is delivered corporately with some services impacted more than others by staff resource issues. Along with the uncertainty of Scottish Government funding streams, there is a risk the Council won't be able to deliver projects at the required rate, or at all.
- 8.3 Although good progress has been made, there is a risk the Council will not meet their 2030 target. Failure to do so may result in reputational loss as the Council isn't mitigating its impact on climate change at the required rate. Falling behind now will likely affect the Council's ability to meet Net Zero by 2045 and in turn, mitigate climate change.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 As reported above, from the financial years 2022/23 to 2023/24, the Council reduced its emissions by 4.6%, and from the base year of 2012/13 to the end of the financial year 2023/24, the Council reduced its emissions by 60%. The Council's Transition to Net Zero Action Plans purpose is to drive emission reductions within key operational areas of Council to meet our 2030 emissions reduction target, enroute to Net Zero by 2045. The Public Bodies' Climate Change Duties is the official means in which progress is reported to the Scottish Government.
- 9.2 Adaptation measures, particularly in relation to land use, continue to be delivered across Angus at a range of scales. The delivery of nature-based solutions ultimately means that nature positive approaches are employed as we adapt to climate change, and ecosystems may be positively impacted. The recognition that the nature and climate crises are linked allows us to consider the benefits for people and nature simultaneously.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

- 10.1 A screening assessment has been undertaken and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required as the Report does not impact on people as it is technical and procedural.

11. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

11.1 A Childrens Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment has been undertaken and a full assessment is not required as the "General Principles" do not apply to this proposal.

12. CONSULTATION

12.1 The Director of Finance and Director of Legal, Governance and Change were consulted in the preparation of this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1: Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report Template 2023/24.

Appendix 2: Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report Summary 2023/24.