

ANGUS COUNCIL

19 MARCH 2020

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIVITY

REPORT BY STEWART BALL, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES

ABSTRACT

This report sets out activity of the Climate Change Member Officer Group and working groups since the Council motion agreed at Angus Council on the 5 September 2019.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council reviews the contents of the report on the recent and upcoming work relating to Climate Change.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

- An inclusive and sustainable economy.
- Improved physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.
- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment.
- A reduced carbon footprint.
- Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 In 2016, a process of self-assessment of Climate Change activity in Angus Council identified a need to review the governance of Climate Change activity. As a result, the existing Carbon Reduction Member Officer Group was expanded to include the remits of Adaptation and Sustainability (Report 397/16 Refers). The Member Officer Group was supported by three working groups concentrating on Adaptation, Carbon Reduction and Sustainability.

3.2 In September 2019 Angus Council agreed a motion that set out that the Council:

- (i) Declares a climate emergency and recognises the impact on life for now and future generations. This Council recognises the work of our Climate Change MOG, its ongoing work now and from previous administrations;
- (ii) Recognises work on carbon reduction including street lighting, in-house heating and improved recycling as an area we have improved the quality of life for Angus residents.
- (iii) Agrees that the Member Officer Group retains its current successful format and meets at agreed schedule to discuss extending the current calendar;
- (iv) Notes the nine point plan and that the MOG will decide what will be taken forward for future consideration; and
- (v) This amendment builds on the good work of Angus Council, the continued MOG and its current ambition to reduce carbon emissions now and in the future.

3.3 The nine point plan referred to includes:

1. We recognise the challenges ahead to tackle climate change, and whilst we have already made significant strides towards achievement of a regional net zero carbon status we will seek to achieve this outcome by the year 2045, aligned to the Angus SECAP, and subject to continuous review;

2. We recognise our critical strategic leadership role to tackle climate change and will strengthen the theme of climate change within community planning/council priorities from which our strategic objectives and outcomes will flow;
3. We will ensure that all future and ongoing policy and practice development across our council directorates and departments identify ways in which we can move further and faster on carbon reduction measures;
4. We recognise the existing impact of the changing climate on the lives of local populations and will work with them to adapt to the impacts of climate change; individuals, communities and businesses need a greater understanding of climate change and its impacts. We will therefore encourage more Resilience Groups to be established in towns as well as in rural areas;
5. We recognise the importance of biodiversity, land use and our natural environment in our drive to reduce the impact of climate change. We will encourage and support practices, such as carbon capture, to enhance and sustain the farmed and natural world, as contained within the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2026;
6. We will embrace innovative measures and respond as a priority to technological advances which can reduce our Council area's impact on climate change. This will enable opportunities to contribute to the economic development and diversity of our area by supporting businesses, communities and partnerships, such as the Tay Cities Deal, which can benefit from schemes and projects which support our priority to tackle climate change;
7. We recognise that our pursuit of net zero carbon emissions is a challenge which all people who live and work in our area will share. Accordingly we will work with others to establish a Climate Action Network in Angus, bringing together representative from across Tayside, including universities and colleges, harnessing the skills, experience and innovation our people possess to inform and influence the action we will take as a council, and sharing best practice. In doing so, we may be able to increase resources which at present are limited;
8. We will produce a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan which will incorporate our obligations under the Climate Change (Emission Reduction Targets)(Scotland) Act 2019 when the relevant provisions are in force, encapsulate everything that we can do to reduce or eliminate carbon emission and will incorporate action on loss of biodiversity and our natural environment;
9. We will work with colleagues in Dundee City Council and the Tayside Pension Board to influence decision- takers to orientate our pension funds towards renewable energies and emerging technologies.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATES

Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP)

- 4.1 The Council's Climate Change Strategy ran from 2012 to 2016. Since 2016 work has been undertaken on a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) to replace the Climate Change Strategy. This work was being undertaken jointly with other North East Scotland authorities under dedicated resource. Unfortunately in 2017, the dedicated resource was lost and work on the North East SEAP stalled and although a draft document for Angus was produced by consultants this was never progressed to adoption.
- 4.2 In 2018 the decision was made to withdraw from the North East work and align more closely with Tayside authorities. This necessitated the production or finalisation of an Angus SEAP. At the same time, guidance evolved to suggest that authorities should look to include adaptation and sustainability work in their plans, and it was therefore decided to produce a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP).
- 4.3 As this work was not possible to progress with internal resources, the Climate Change MOG agreed in October 2019 that the work should be commissioned externally. A tender process

has recently been completed and subject to agreement on funding from the Change Programme, the contract will shortly be let.

- 4.4 The SECAP will look to set the Council and partner's actions in relation to Climate Change, and the process of developing the SECAP will involve significant stakeholder involvement. It is anticipated that one of the first actions of the SECAP work will be to undertake another iteration of the Climate Change Self-Assessment. A final SECAP is expected to be published towards the end of 2020.

Working Group Action Plans

- 4.5 An audit of the Council's Climate Change work in 2019 resulted in a need to produce action plans for the three working groups that report to the Climate Change MOG. The Adaptation and Sustainability Action Plans have now been produced and agreed and work will be undertaken to monitor the actions. Work continues on drafting the Carbon Reduction Action Plan, and this will be presented to the next working group for agreement.
- 4.6 The Action Plans will evolve and be incorporated into the SECAP work to ensure alignment and efficiencies in reporting.

Climate Change Mandatory Reporting

- 4.7 Angus Council has 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 on-line report template to ensure consistency between bodies and over time. Angus Council submitted its first mandatory report in November 2016, covering the period 2015/16.
- 4.8 The last Report was brought before Policy and Resources Committee in October 2019 (Report 336/19 refers).
- 4.9 It is expected that the guidance for 2020 reports will be simplified. The MOG agreed that the report this year should aim to be more accessible and some resource should be allocated to communicating the contents of the report to illustrate the significant efforts being made towards climate change work across the Council.
- 4.10 Information for the report will be collected in the following months and a report brought before Policy and Resources Committee in October 2020.

Engagement

- 4.11 The Climate Change MOG was informed of current and planned engagement work including:
- Angus Council staff continue to engage with communities and a range of stakeholders to develop and support action to meet the Scottish Government's target to cut all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2045.
 - Angus community group 'Sustainable Kirriemuir' received Climate Challenge Development Fund monies to deliver a 'Route to Zero' community workshop in March 2020. The event will be supported by the Angus Community Planning Partnership and Angus Council officers with expertise in Low Carbon Energy, Land Use, Biodiversity and Strategic Planning. Topics for discussion include Agriculture, Food, Transport, Business, Waste and Biodiversity.
 - Climate Change action in the Cairngorms National Park will be explored at the March 2020 'Net Zero with Nature' Conference. The purpose of the conference is to bring strategic decision makers together to hear what the climate emergency means for the Cairngorms and what needs to be done to meet the Scottish Government's net zero target for 2045. Land Use, Biodiversity Loss, Communities & Business and Transport and Active Travel will be key focus areas.

- 4.12 Education and Lifelong Learning will be hosting a climate change conference. Planning is underway with the focus being climate change issues of relevance to our children and young people including active travel, the curriculum, waste and recycling. The lead officers of the three Climate Change working groups will work with Education and Lifelong Learning Officers to support and help facilitate this work.

Working Group Updates

- 4.13 Appendix 1 includes updates from the three Working Groups that support the Climate Change MOG. These updates reflect work going on across the Council that contributes to the Climate Change agenda. The information in this appendix may not be comprehensive, but it is intended to give an indication as to the extent of recent relevant work.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a result 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.

REPORT AUTHOR: STEWART BALL, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES
EMAIL DETAILS:

Appendix 1 – Working Group Updates

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Adaptation

The Arbroath Flood Protection Scheme is at a detailed design/procurement stage and likely to start on site this year. The scheme is designed to protect Arbroath from a 1 in 200 return period flood. It consists of three storage reservoirs upstream of the town which will store peak flows and limit flows in the Brothock Burn. These will be to an acceptable level which can be contained within upgraded and new walls and embankments through Arbroath.

The most recent consultation by Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) relates to locations designated as Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVA's) in the original national flood risk assessment. Actions to reduce flood risk have been identified in the local flood risk management plan and need to be undertaken by the responsible authorities (Scottish Water, SEPA and LA's). SEPA have now designated objective target areas within PVA's and these are smaller clusters of flood risk to which more specific actions will apply through the next cycle of flood risk assessment.

The following link to the current Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin Flood Risk Management Plan describes the actions being undertaken within Angus. A number of actions will incorporate consideration of climate change predictions and promoting resilience within local communities http://www.angus.gov.uk/sites/anguscms/files/2017-07/Tay_Estuary_and_Montrose_Basin_Local_Flood_Risk_Management_Plan.pdf

“Our Rivers” LEADER Transnational Cooperation Project - River South Esk Catchment Partnership project aims to facilitate the creation of resilient, innovative and prosperous Communities on a landscape scale. The project focuses on collaborative river management, invasive non-native species control, climate change resilience, community volunteering, and wildlife/nature/cultural tourism. In June 2020 a group of Municipality professionals from Merikarvia, Finland will visit Angus for the second leg of transnational exchanges. A series of community workshops are now being planned for 2020 in addition to the sharing good practice visit.

A River South Esk Catchment Partnership application initially submitted to the Biodiversity Challenge Fund in April 2019 was approved by Scottish Natural Heritage in late 2019 (approx. £130k). Projects must include targeted habitat action including: re-establishing habitat; increasing connectivity; changing habitat management and addressing previous physical modifications. The Project will achieve this by:

1. Delivering riverbank restoration and wetland habitat creation at five sites in the upper catchment;
2. Native broadleaf expansion (5000 trees) in riparian and montane zones in the upper catchment;
3. Monitoring of sites before and after restoration

Carbon

Our end of financial year forecast for Council energy use is 95% of target and our water consumption is only 75.4%.

Assets team are progressing with energy improvement works to our Council housing stock to ensure compliance with Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing at the end of this calendar year.

Assets team are progressing the following projects which should be on site in the coming months.

- 200Kw PV system for Brechin CC
- 50Kw PV system for Angus House

The draft 2019/2024 Capital Plan will be presented at the budget setting meeting on the 27th February and includes a bid of £450k for Renewable & Low Carbon Technologies and £115k for LED Lighting Upgrades.

We have been awarded a £50k grant from Scottish Government to develop a pilot of our Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES). The proposal is to select six rural communities off the gas grid in different locations ranging in size but with a population circa 1000 or less and thereafter consider the energy needs and potential energy solutions. Thereafter we will produce a 20 year strategy to deliver on Scottish Government targets.

Low CO2 Transport & Travel Funding awarded for an Electric Vehicle hub at Orchardbank, comprising a mixture of charge types. We are hopeful to have the works on site early next month with a completion date of June 2020.

6 x rapid chargers – superfast allowing approx. 80% charging within 30 mins. 50 kW.
3 fast chargers - charge within 1-2 hours. 22 kW.
2 slow chargers –charge within 6-7 hours. 7kW.

Switched on Towns & Cities - The feasibility study of potential for EV infrastructure in Arbroath has been completed and potential sites have narrowed down to three or four from the original 10. This will form the basis of a funding bid to the Switched on Towns & Places Fund when applications open in June/July 2020.

We now have a fleet of 17 electric cars, seven new Hyundai Ionics are about to be introduced with potential to obtain a further two. As part of our estate rationalisation we are coming out of 32 office buildings and locating only nine. It is the intention to have cars at all of these locations.

Sustainability

Sustainable Food and Drink Strategy –. The Child and Food Poverty working group has met and agreed actions to develop a collaborative approach to Food Poverty across Angus. The purpose of the research is to collate a comprehensive list of projects and services in Angus to identify the work that is already happening or is about to happen, identify gaps and explore potential for partnership working to expand provision. The mapping exercise and survey is now complete and the findings will be used to create a directory of breakfast/lunch club provision throughout Angus.

Actions for the working group include: Engagement and Collaboration with Communities and partners, Brexit and Resilience. A final report that will be included in the Angus Child Poverty Action report.

Angus Council is working with the tourism sector to deliver the Angus Tourism Framework. A number of working groups are in place to deliver activity against the following priority themes;

- Industry Leadership & Collaboration
- Pride of Place
- Data & Insights
- Product & Experience Development
- Marketing

A LEADER funded project, 'Flourishing Destinations', which is aligned to the Pride of Place activity, is focused on community-led tourism. The project aims to engage with the Angus community and develop local tourism in an organic way that benefits the wider community, as businesses, residents, community groups and voluntary organisations can all play a part in creating the authentic destination that visitors want to visit and experience.

A Tay Cities Region Tourism Strategy has also been developed, to focus on activity to be delivered regionally, where there is a rationale for doing so. The strategy is based on a number of shared values, including 'Sustainable Growth' and 'Quality of Life'. Improving the Customer Journey will also be addressed in the regional strategy, with a focus on connectivity and infrastructure.

Digital Connectivity is an issue for Angus businesses and tourism in general. Alison Henderson from Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce attended the September meeting of the Sustainable Working Group and gave an overview of the "Circular Tayside" Initiative. It was agreed that Economic Development and Dundee & Angus Chamber will work together to develop a survey to reach businesses to capture data on businesses that would benefit from rural broadband. The digital connectivity survey run by Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce remains open for a few more weeks.

Circular Tayside Angus Business Update:

- Since September 2019, 10 Angus businesses have been approached, two of which were social enterprises. All of them are micro-enterprises.
- One company has received a circular economy fund, whereas one was unsuccessful. Currently 2 companies are being assisted for fund and business support.
- Two Angus businesses are Circular Tayside Ambassadors: here is the full list of current ambassadors: <https://circulartayside.co.uk/circular-taysideambassador/>
- 2 Circular Economy Events have been held in Angus since September 2019.

- Angus has many examples of businesses and social enterprises using circular economy business models and products
- The Circular Tayside Map shows the some of the Angus based businesses
<https://circulartayside.co.uk/circular-tayside-map/>