
Report To:	Environment and Regeneration Committee	Date:	31/10/2019
Report By:	Corporate Director, Environment, Regeneration and Resources	Report No:	E&R/19/10/01 /SJ/AW
Contact Officer:	Paul Murphy	Contact No:	01475 712402
Subject:	Scottish Government Consultation on the Role Of Public Sector Bodies in Tackling Climate Change		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the Scottish Government consultation on the role of public sector bodies in tackling climate change and to seek approval of the response submitted on behalf of the Council.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Scottish Government has, in line with the UK Committee on Climate Change's recommendations, set a target for Scotland to have net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. It considers that the public sector has a key role to play in achieving this. The Scottish Government is, therefore, consulting on the role that public sector bodies can play in tackling climate change.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended the Environment and Regeneration Committee approves the Council's responses to the consultation on the role of public sector bodies in tackling climate change set out in Appendix 1.

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4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 sets a target to reduce Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 (from a 1990 baseline). The target was based on evidence that global greenhouse gas emissions reductions of between 50% and 85% by 2050 would be required to minimise the chances of a global temperature rise in excess of 2°C.
- 4.2 In December 2015, the United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Paris. At the conference, a global agreement was made to limit the global temperature rise to 2°C by the end of the century and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C. This was termed the UN Paris Agreement and came into force on 4 November 2016.
- 4.3 In May 2019, the UK Committee on Climate Change published its report entitled 'Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming'. The report was a response to a request from the Governments of the UK, Wales and Scotland to reassess the UK's long-term emissions targets. One of the report's recommendations was that Scotland achieves net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. The Scottish Government has agreed with this recommendation and, along with a number of other public sector bodies, has declared a 'climate emergency'.
- 4.4 The Scottish Government considers the public sector to have a key role to play in tackling climate change. Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, entitled 'Public Bodies Duties' places a duty on public sector bodies to take action with respect to climate change mitigation and adaptation. In 2015, the Scottish Government implemented the part of the Act that requires public sector bodies to report annually on their emissions and action taken to tackle climate change.

5.0 CONSULTATION ON THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SECTOR BODIES IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

- 5.1 The Scottish Government has, in line with the UK Committee on Climate Change's recommendations, set a target for Scotland to have net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. It considers that the public sector has a key role to play in achieving this. The Scottish Government is, therefore, consulting on the role that public sector bodies can play in tackling climate change. The consultation proposes a High Ambition Climate Network comprising those Chief Executives and Elected Members in public sector bodies regarded as leaders in committing to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. The consultation further proposes that all public sector bodies set a target year by which they will cease to emit any direct greenhouse gases. The target year is not legislative. Subsequently, public sector bodies will be asked to report on how they will align their spending plans with the target and use their resources to contribute to reducing emissions. There are also proposed changes to the existing mandatory Public Bodies Duties Public Sector Climate Change Reporting. Public sector bodies will only be required to report on their emissions and information pertinent to ending Scotland's contribution to climate change. The reports would be publicly accessible and in a format that clearly illustrates to stakeholders and the public progress in achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions.
- 5.2 The response to the consultation, which is set out for approval in Appendix 1, states that the Council agrees with the proposed High Ambition Climate Network and for Public Sector Bodies to set a non-legislative target date to achieve net-zero direct greenhouse gas emissions. The response further agrees that public sector bodies should report annually on how they use their resources to contribute to reducing emissions.
- 5.3 In terms of mandatory annual Public Bodies Duties Public Sector Climate Change Reporting, the consultation response is the Council agrees with the proposed changes to the reporting requirements. The Council further agrees that the reports should be made publicly available in a format that is easy for stakeholders and the public to interpret.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, public sector bodies are requested to state how their spending plans align with achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Financial implications

One off costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Annually Recurring Costs/Savings

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From	Other Comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Legal

- 6.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Human Resources

- 6.3 There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report.

Equalities

- 6.4 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

Repopulation

- 6.5 There are no direct repopulation implications arising from this report.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Council's Finance and Legal and Property Services were consulted on the content of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 The consultation document can be viewed on the Scottish Government web site:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/role-public-sector-bodies-tackling-climate-change-consultation/>

Appendix – Inverclyde Council response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the role of Public Sector Bodies in tackling climate change.

Consultation: The role of Public Sector Bodies in tackling climate change

Proposed Inverclyde Council response

Q1. What additional training, information or guidance do you think Public Sector Bodies need to help them increase their action on climate change?

- Training specifically targeted at Corporate Management and Elected/Board Member level on the local, national and international impacts of climate change and how to embed within the organisation a culture that is responsive to the issue. Developing such a culture should result in climate change being considered in all aspects of the organisation's operations.
- Information on initiatives and innovations that have been successful in helping mitigate and adapt to climate change and their implications in terms of cost, disruption and so on. In particular those that are transformational. This should be targeted at Corporate and Senior Management level.

Q2. What are your views on the proposed structure for the High Ambition Climate Network of Chief Executives and Elected Members?

- The proposed structure is good with the Public Sector Bodies comprising the core membership likely to be those that are larger and/or have greater flexibility in terms of risk and innovation. Those Public Sector Bodies that have less scope for risk and innovation can subsequently learn, through the electronic network, of initiatives that consistently work well and how to manage any disruption from their implementation.

Q3. Do you agree that Public Sector Bodies should be required to set targets for when they will achieve zero direct emissions, and for reduced indirect emissions?

- Yes. Setting such targets at an organisational level and monitoring progress against them should help provide focus to take the transformative action required.

Q4. Do you agree that Public Sector Bodies should report annually on how they use their resources to contribute to reducing emissions?

- Yes. This should help embed climate change action throughout the whole Public Sector Body and provide weight to the targets set. However, guidance on this matter will be required so public bodies know what should be included and the process does not become onerous.

Q5. Do you agree that the details of what Public Sector Bodies are required to report on should be set out in statutory guidance instead of on the face of secondary legislation (otherwise known as an Order)?

- Yes since it would allow greater flexibility with respect to the nature and detail of what is reported and make reporting more responsive to updates in information, suggested improvements and so on.

Q6. Do you agree to the proposed changes to the list of Public Sector Bodies that are required to annually report their emissions?

- Yes. Reporting should apply to those Public Bodies that have the ability to reduce their emissions such as those with their own estate, fleet, influence over business

travel and so on. The list of Public Bodies required to report should be annually reviewed to ensure that all those with such influence over their emissions are included.

Q7. Do you agree with our proposals for amending the reporting requirements as set out above?

- Yes as the changes will make reporting less onerous and reduce repetition. The focus of reporting should be on assessing progress in achieving the long-term targets and transformational change. The only caveat to this is that the C-CAT tool can be useful for self-assessment by Public Bodies.

Q8. Is there anything else you think should be added to the reporting duties, or anything else you think should be removed?

- Possibly a space to include a narrative about what Public Bodies are considering in terms of climate change action. The action could be short, medium and long term and specific to blue-sky thinking.

Q9. Do you agree that Public Sector Bodies should each make their own report on emissions reductions publicly available?

- Yes and the information should be displayed in a format that it easy for the public to interpret. Such transparency is likely to provide an impetus to Public Bodies to make climate change action a priority and continually improve.

Other comments

The public sector is one that can have a significant influence on driving the transformational change required to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions. This is through implementing physical measures in the form of energy efficiency and zero/low carbon technologies but also through Planning and encouraging behaviour change among its employees and those that use its services. In order to do this, however, the public sector requires clarity from the Scottish Government in terms of policy, legislation and standards. It further requires sufficient powers, support and resources to make the changes needed.