

Sustainable Development Committee

Climate Change Route Map – Update on Actions

1. Overview

Since the Climate Change Route Map (CCRM) was approved by Council on 17 June the Sustainable Development Core Group has focused activity on assessing priority actions across the 5 themes of the CCRM. An amendment was agreed at the Council meeting June that a priority action plan be prepared and presented to Council by February 2022. Officers have been working to identify priority actions from both the approved CCRM and also from the significant amount of preparatory work which was done prior to the completion of the document.

Pressure of other priorities, for example UK Govt Levelling Up Fund, SoS Regional Economic Strategy, regional Growth Deals, has resulted in additional officer time being focused on these areas.

The commitment made within the 2021-22 Council budget to allocate funding for the establishment of 9 community/engagement/support posts, including a Climate Change Officer, has allowed a recruitment exercise to be undertaken. A preferred candidate was identified, but, unfortunately, decided not to accept the offer of the role. Officers are considering how to proceed, including modifying the role description, the current terms and conditions and re-advertising.

2. Priority Actions

It is proposed that the focus for priority actions over the next 2 years should be on activities which the Council have full or significant control over. These actions will therefore be related to the CCRM themes of Transport (including SBC Fleet), Energy and Waste as the first areas of focus, reflecting the Council's strong direct involvement in these activities. At the same time, Nature-based solutions will be a strong area of initial focus with the Council engaging broadly with partners across the South of Scotland and beyond in responding to land use emissions and biodiversity imperatives through the South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership and the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, particularly the Natural Capital Proposition and elements of Destination Tweed.

There are potentially significant funding opportunities associated with the UK Govt Levelling Up Fund to support projects across the **Transport** theme (e.g active travel and passenger transport) and town centre regeneration which would also support access to local services thus offering emissions reductions in both domestic energy and local travel.

Key actions within the **Energy** theme are likely to focus on continued energy efficiency investments with the Council buildings estate and delivery of actions within the Affordable Warmth and Energy Efficiency Strategy. Further strategic energy action will flow from the South of Scotland Enterprise Energy Transition Group and Borderlands Energy Masterplan. Actions under the **Waste** theme will be further prioritised from those identified within the CCRM.

The Council commissioned Keep Scotland Beautiful earlier this year to deliver 2 cohorts of **Carbon Literacy training** to staff. The courses comprise four 1 hour workshops, covering the science and history of anthropogenic climate change, likely impacts for Scotland and the Scottish Borders, possible effects on Council service provision and infrastructure, and how the Council can respond to these challenges. The course is certificated on completion of the modules. The second cohort of training is running currently and will be completed by mid-September when the 2 courses will be assessed by Organisational Development, and proposals developed for a Council programme of training including Elected Members.

3. Governance & Engagement

Officers have been strengthening the Council's internal governance structures to support (through delivery of the CCRM) what will be one of the biggest, most complex and longest programmes of activity the Council has been involved in. This activity has involved clarity around our key workstreams of activity, lead officers and the groups of supporting officers vested with taking the workstreams forward.

- **Programme Board** – a programme board structure is being developed to direct the development and implementation of the CCRM. The definition of roles and responsibilities within this structure are currently being identified, the key work streams reflect the Themes within the CCRM. This structure may also form the governance vehicle for the Council's wider commitments to embed and deliver against the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

- **Advisory Group and Citizens Assembly**

The CCRM set out commitments for engagement and oversight of progress towards a 2045 net zero target for the Scottish Borders.

The proposal papers attached have been produced to establish and maintain -

- A high-level **Advisory Group** to provide external oversight and review of the Scottish Borders Climate Change Route Map (CCRM) and to consider additional interventions and actions required to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2045, or sooner.
- A **Citizens Assembly** as a key engagement tool, a sounding board, and as an integral element of our CCRM governance'. The proposal is to design, develop, facilitate and report on a Citizens' Assembly for the Scottish Borders.

4. Net Zero Commission for SOS

South of Scotland Enterprise has proposed that a Net Zero Commission for the South of Scotland is established to drive forward and co-ordinate the transition to net zero.

An initial meeting took place on 18 August with a further meeting likely to be scheduled prior to November's COP26 in Glasgow. The key objective of the Commission is cohering and leveraging the South of Scotland natural capital and transition assets and capabilities into a competitive package to secure inclusive benefit for the region, such as through private investment in net zero initiatives. It is recognised that the field of Climate Action, in particular, is a crowded space, and that in the South of Scotland, as elsewhere, there is a preponderance of initiatives moving at different speeds. SOSE and the two South of Scotland local authorities are due to discuss further the practical aspects of a SOS

Net Zero approach in the context of the respective local authority Climate Change Route Maps. Clearly, partners are determined to marshal their capacities to optimal effect.

5. Reporting to Members

Reporting progress against CCRM commitments and the embedding of the UN Sustainable Development Goals is delivered through the Sustainable Development Committee, which has the primary oversight role in relation to climate action and sustainability issues. However, the SDC does not have decision-making powers, so matters requiring a formal decision by committee are remitted to full Council, or the Council Executive Committee.

At its meeting of 17 June 2021, Council agreed:

- (a) to approve the Climate Change Route Map set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (b) that officers be tasked with producing a plan of priority actions to be undertaken over the next two years; the plan's development to be scrutinised and informed by the Sustainable Development Committee, with a view to reporting back to full Council in February 2022.

The present update represents the first opportunity to update the SDC on progress with the CCRM since the Council meeting of 17 June. It is intended that further updates will be provided to future meetings of the SDC through to reporting back to full Council in February 2022.