
CLIMATE CHANGE ROUTE MAP PRIORITY ACTION PLAN

Report by Director Infrastructure and Environment
SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

10 March 2022

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report requests that Council approves the draft 'Climate Change Route Map - Priority Action Plan 2022/24' set out in Appendix 1.**
- 1.2 At its meeting of 17 June 2021, Scottish Borders Council approved a 'Scottish Borders Climate Change Route Map' ('the CCRM') and agreed that 'a plan of priority actions to be undertaken over the next two years' be developed and brought back to Council for consideration in February 2022. Council is invited to approve the draft 'Priority Action Plan' set out at Appendix 1 of this report.
- 1.3 It is proposed that progress and delivery of the Priority Action Plan be overseen and scrutinised by the Sustainable Development Committee, with a consolidated report presented annually to full Council. Council is also asked to note that the Priority Action Plan will continue to develop and incorporate additional workstreams. These developments will be reported to the Sustainable Development Committee.

2 STATUS OF REPORT

- 2.1 At its meeting of 17 June 2021, Scottish Borders Council agreed that a 'plan of priority actions to be undertaken over the next two years' should be reported back to full Council in February 2022.
- 2.2 The scheduling of the Council's Financial Plans and related business to 22 February 2022, has necessitated presentation of the draft Priority Action Plan to the next scheduled Council meeting which is 10 March.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 I recommend that Council:

- a) Approves the draft 'Climate Change Route Map - Priority Action Plan 2022/24' ('the Priority Action Plan') set out in Appendix 1.**
- b) Agrees progress and delivery of the Priority Action Plan shall be overseen and scrutinised by the Sustainable Development Committee, and shall be reported annually to full Council.**
- c) Note the additional actions set out in para 5.5 of this report to be developed by officers during 2022 and reported to the Sustainable Development Committee as early as practicable in the new Council term.**

4 BACKGROUND

At a glance – Scottish Borders Climate Change Route Map Facts

Resident Scottish Borders population in 2020	115,240 Aged 0-15 – 18,824 (16.3%) Scotland = 16.8% Aged 16-64 - 67,332 (58.4%) Scotland = 64% Aged 65+ - 29,084 (25.2%) Scotland = 19.3%
Households in 2020	54,796 households (48% located in rural areas)
Total GHG emissions in 2018/19	782,900 t CO ₂ e Net 510,700 t CO ₂ e (includes land use positive balance of - 229,400 t CO ₂ e)
Per capita GHG emissions in 2018/19	Net 4.4t CO ₂ e/person/year Scottish average 5.3t CO ₂ e/person/year
Household waste emissions	1.07t CO ₂ e per person/year of GHG
Area of Scottish Borders	1,827m ² (4732 km ²) - Pop density 24.4/km ² 4 th lowest density in mainland Scotland. Over 80% agriculture, 20% woodland, 15% peatland, 30 km coast
Net area emissions in 2018/19	100 tCO ₂ e/km ² - Scottish average 400 tCO ₂ e/km ²
Largest settlements 2019	Hawick (13,859), Galashiels (12,622), Peebles (8,577) Kelso (6,843), Selkirk (5,503), Jedburgh (3,826)
Visitors (3-year averages 2017-19)	Day trips 2,700,000 Overnight 396,000 (1,300,000 nights)
Businesses in Scottish Borders	Micro (0-9) 4,485, Small (10-49) 420 Medium (50-249) 60, Large (250+) 10 Total 4,980
Main 'A' roads length/vehicle numbers (e)	460km A7 (6000/day), A68 (13,414/day), A1 (8,000/day), A6091 (11,000/day)
Vehicle miles travelled	810 Million vehicle miles in 2019 across SB
Number of EVs and Chargers in Scottish Borders 2020	312 EVs 42 Public charging devices (includes non-SBC) 13 Devices per EV
Community Councils	69
Scottish Borders SBC	
SBC Revenue Resources 2022/23	£324,871,000 (including Aggregate External Finance, 20% from SBC Council tax plus other revenues)
Per capita spend	£2819
SBC Estate/floor space	935717.8m ²
SBC Land (m²)	572.07 ha (not including Common Good land) = 5,720,700m ²
SBC Vehicles (numbers)	381 (59 cars of which 16 are electric [a further 20 electric cars are on order but are not included in these numbers] 186 LCV's of which 24 vans are electric 136 HGV's of which all are diesel)
SBC % of total SB GHG emissions	2%
Household waste collected and treated	52,300 tonnes per annum. Per person 0.45t recycled 0.22t, diverted 0.1t, land filled 0.13t
SBC Employees 2020	4992
Roads SBC managed	3,000km

- 4.1 Having declared a Climate Emergency on 29 September 2020, the Council approved the 'Scottish Borders Climate Change Route Map' (CCRM) on 17 June 2021. The Climate Change Route Map is the Scottish Borders' response to climate change, accepting that, as a result of human activities, our world is heating up, ice is melting, seas are warming, and our climate is becoming less stable with disastrous consequences. In a Scottish Borders' context, the developing risks associated with climate change have already begun to manifest themselves in changing weather patterns, and the resulting flooding and storm damage.
- 4.2 The Climate Change Route Map (CCRM) sets a strategic direction for the Council and its partners and communities to move to a net zero emissions Scottish Borders economy by 2045, in line with the national target set by the Scottish Government. The CCRM is structured around 5 Themes, each consisting of 5 Milestones. These Themes are:
- Building Resilience
 - Decarbonising our Transport Use
 - Nature-based Solutions to Climate Change
 - Lowering our Energy Consumption
 - Decarbonising our Waste Management
- 4.3 The priority actions specified in Appendix 1 respond to the Milestones identified within the themes of CCRM. Clearly, it would not be possible to deliver everything at the same pace or time, so an assessment has been undertaken to determine which actions should be prioritised over the next two years.

5 IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY ACTIONS

- 5.1 A 'Priority Action Plan working group' of Officers from across the Council was formed to identify 'priority actions' under the direction of the Corporate Sustainability Board, which is chaired by the Director of Infrastructure and Environment. The Board was established to develop and drive forward Council action on delivering the CCRM, and embedding the United Nations Sustainability Goals across Council activity. It comprises expertise from across directorates and reports to the Sustainable Development Committee.
- 5.2 As noted, the role of the working group was to identify, develop and collate actions into a Priority Action Plan pursuant to delivery of the CCRM. The working Group identified priority actions:
- Where delivery or significant progress can be effected in the next 2 years;
 - Which are building blocks that require to be established to support long-term and/or future actions in the next 2 years;
 - Which consolidate and build on the significant Climate Change activity the Council and partners have been engaged into this point.
- 5.3 The Priority Action Plan attached as Appendix 1 comprises a simple table of actions structured around the 5 CCRM themes. Some themes have identified a greater number of actions than others and there is synergy between actions showing the need for collaboration across themes. The action table sets out a description of the proposed activity, details of the tasks required, where possible the anticipated savings in carbon emissions and climate adaptation benefits, projects costs and timescales. As noted,

some actions included in the table are key strategic steps in longer-term approaches to Climate Change, e.g. Action BR5 'South East Scotland Regional Climate Risk Assessment' and TU1-5 'Local Access and Transport Strategy'.

- 5.4 It must be emphasised that the Plan of Priority Actions is simply one evolving chapter of intended progress across a generational timescale. Citizens, businesses, our partners, and the Council were engaged in activity designed to respond to Climate Change before the CCRM was agreed, and all of us will be continuing to augment, develop and deliver carbon emission reductions as we proceed to 2024 and beyond. Much has been done, but, as [the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) makes painfully clear, we must do much much more. Many impacts are now simply 'irreversible', but the authors say there is still a brief window of time to avoid the very worst. The Crisis calls for the complete re-orientation of policy and strategy to help support a transition from a fossil fuel local economy to a clean energy one. We must all reduce our emissions. This means challenging every aspect of how we currently go about our business, and changing how we live, travel, and work. There are critical legislative milestones on the way: a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030, and 90% by 2040, before net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. In 2045, the work will not cease, but the aim will be, at the very least, sustainable processes and behaviours.
- 5.5 It should also be noted that officers will continue to develop additional and subsequent actions during 2022 and beyond to add to and support the activity reflected in the Plan of Priority Actions. This is in the nature of the continually evolving and changing programme of action, which makes up the CCRM. Key developments will include:
- a) Updating and improving our assessment of carbon emissions impacts across our organisation and the Scottish Borders. This objective is identified as a 3rd quarter milestone within the Council Plan 2022/23. Assessment of the carbon emissions reduction impact of actions is a challenge for SBC, as it is for other organisations. In the short term, it is intended to commission consultancy support to enhance the Council's capability. At the same time, there is a developing dialogue with SOSE and Dumfries & Galloway Council about the use of common metrics and collaboration across the South of Scotland. These efforts should also provide a clear framework for measurement against the shared ambition embodied within the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy.
 - b) Developing our approach to engagement, co-production and joint working. The CCRM envisages a High Level Advisory Group (HLAG) to provide external oversight and review of the CCRM by working in partnership across the region, and a Citizens Panel or Assembly, facilitating engagement and co-governance of the developing CCRM. Officers are currently assessing how these initiatives are affected by a series of developments. Those developments include:
 - i. A review of current Community Planning Partnership (CPP) arrangements within the Scottish Borders including ways of working, and CPP priorities and performance. The CPP provides a natural vehicle through which to oversee and guide the Scottish Borders CCRM. With this in mind, the Senior Policy Advisor and Environmental Strategy Co-ordinator presented to the Community Planning Programme Board on 9 February and the Community

- Planning Strategic Board on 3 March to aid the review process, and to support dialogue around how community planning delivers the objectives of a HLAG.
- ii. Dialogue with SOSE, and Dumfries & Galloway Council regarding a South of Scotland Net Zero approach, including the development of common climate metrics to measure performance (as noted in para 4.5a)), engagement processes and structures across the South of Scotland, and shared ambitions around a South Scotland pathway to Net Zero.
 - iii. Roll out of the Council's Place Making Programme. The Council is trying to not to duplicate processes of engagement, but to ensure that what it puts in place is the most effective method of engagement and co-production. It is recognised that Place Making provides a natural focus on action which will be community-led, and systemic – bringing public, private, third sector, and community assets together as part of a single, integrated system supporting communities, services and the economy. Officers are continuing to assess what is likely to be the optimal vehicle and how different approaches might work together in delivering the objectives of first, a deliberative and collaborative space in which the public inform our climate decisions and policy, and second, encourage co-governance of our approach, particularly in relation to the just transition to a green economy.
- c) Appointment of a Climate Change Officer. The Council is aiming to recruit a Climate Change Officer to play a lead role in the assessment and measurement of greenhouse gas emissions associated with actions identified through the CCRM as set out in para 4.5a). An earlier effort to recruit a Climate Change Officer was unsuccessful. The terms of the role and the job specification have been enhanced to make it more attractive to prospective candidates.

It should be emphasised that two overarching aims pervade this work. These are:

- The necessity of a 'just transition' to Net Zero. As the Just Transition Commission recognised: 'People need to see and experience the transition as being fair; pushing ahead without giving attention to a just transition will see progress stalled. Achieving climate targets and a just transition cannot be separated.'
- The Scottish Borders can best unlock its economic potential by putting the environment and sustainability at the forefront of growing our economy in line with the objectives of the Council Plan 2022/23 and the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy.

Officers will report progress on the workstreams and developments detailed in this paragraph to the Sustainable Development Committee as early as practicable in the term of the new Council post the May 2022 elections.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

The CCRM is a framework to support our journey to Net Zero by 2045. The Priority Action Plan outlines the activities and estimated resources required to deliver project outcomes as an element of that journey. The budget requirement for many projects has been identified within the

approved Financial Plan. Any additional budgetary implications or requirements will be reported to members as they materialise. If budget is unavailable or insufficient, adjustments will be required to the Plan of Priority Actions setting out what is deliverable.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

The following key risks and mitigations have been identified –

1. Failure of the Council to deliver against its legal duties under current and developing climate legislation and policy commitments within the CCRM. It is essential that appropriate skills development takes place and that adequate resource and capacity is available to deliver against these requirements. Regular monitoring and review processes will be required to ensure compliance and delivery. This includes the overview and scrutiny of the Sustainable Development Committee. The recruitment of a Climate Change Officer and, pending such recruitment, consultancy support will enhance the technical capability and capacity of the Council in assessing carbon emissions reductions.
2. The Council committed to adopting and implementing a Climate Change Route Map at its meeting of 17th June 2021, requesting that a plan of priority actions is developed. The Council will face significant reputational risk if it fails to support delivery of these actions, and further support of the commitments made within the CCRM and the Plan of Priority Actions.
3. There are also potential financial and service delivery risks associated with not addressing the need to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate. These impacts will include increased likelihood of extreme weather events, effects on transport and access to services and service delivery, security of supply of energy, food and other goods. By taking action on the basis of the Plan of Priority Actions, the Council will mitigate these risks.
4. The changes required to place and maintain the Council and the wider Scottish Borders on a Just Transition to Net Zero are without precedent. Quite apart from the changes required in our processes, the extent of behaviour change required presents significant public expectation management risks. It is intended to address these through oversight of the Sustainable Development Committee, and the work set out in para 5.5, including critically the public, private, third sector, and community engagement envisaged through the Place-Making Programme.
5. To strengthen its management of risks associated with climate change, the Council has identified and is in the final stages of developing a revamped corporate climate change risk for ongoing monitoring and review. This risk will be informed by the progress made on the priority actions set out in Appendix 1. Key threats alluded to in this report in relation to e.g. governance, engagement, resourcing, and delivering on associated priorities have been included as risk factors (as failure to implement/act on these may give rise to the risk) and subsequent consequences have also been noted (such as those relating to an inability to embed climate change actions within all services, reputational damage and minimising the impacts of climate change). Internal controls and mitigating actions have been identified or are being pursued in order to alleviate against the risk of failing to assess and address the impacts of climate change and examples of these are evidenced throughout this report.

6.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken. This has reinforced the need to ensure that a transition to a Net Zero economy must be just, with the critical consideration of equality of opportunity. 'This means, in the Scottish Borders as elsewhere, developing policies and delivering actions which ensure the benefits of climate change action are shared widely, while the costs do not unfairly burden those less able to pay, or whose livelihoods are directly or indirectly at risk as the economy shifts and changes.' This imperative has helped inform the identification of actions within the Plan of Priority Actions.

6.4 **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**

These comprise 17 interlinked goals. UN SDG 13: 'Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts' is clearly the most relevant to the proposals contained within the Plan of Priority Actions. However, the Plan also strives to deliver against other UN SDGs with Goal 1 – to end poverty, 2 – promote sustainable agriculture, 7- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, relevant to the objective of a 'just transition'.

6.5 **Climate Change**

The purpose of this report is to establish an effective Plan of Priority Actions over the next two years pursuant to the CCRM to support the Council and the Scottish Borders region in a just transition to Net Zero emissions by 2045, and appropriate adaptation and resilience measures.

6.6 **Rural Proofing**

The Plan of Priority Actions and the CCRM within which it is set are underpinned by the Council's commitment to deliver on the UN SDGs, and our duties under Equalities legislation. Thus, an equalities based approach, including in rural settings, is built into the recommendations of this report which are complementary and conducive to the objective of Rural Proofing.

6.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes are required to the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Director (Finance & Corporate Governance), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

John Curry

Signature

Director Infrastructure and Environment

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Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference:

Scottish Borders Council, 17 June 2021;
Scottish Borders Council, 17 December 2020;
Scottish Borders Council, 25 September 2020.

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jenny Wilkinson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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