

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 29 November 2023

Chair:

Councillor Mark McGeever

Councillors Present:

Councillor John Anderson, Councillor Ralph Barker, Councillor Andrea Cowan (*substitute for Councillor Katy Loudon*), Councillor Colin Dewar, Councillor Elise Frame (*substitute for Councillor Julia Marrs*), Councillor Ross Gowland, Councillor Lynsey Hamilton, Councillor Gavin Keatt, Councillor Ross Lambie, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Lesley McDonald, Councillor Elaine McDougall, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor Kirsten Robb (Depute), Councillor Graham Scott, Councillor Helen Toner, Councillor Margaret B Walker

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Ross Clark, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Joe Fagan (ex officio), Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Monique McAdams, Councillor Carol Nugent, Councillor John Ross, Councillor Bert Thomson

Attending:

Community and Enterprise Resources

D Booth, Executive Director; K Allan, Sustainable Development Officer; J Birkin, Biodiversity Officer; A Brown, Head of Enterprise and Sustainable Development; F Carlin, Head of Planning and Regulatory Services; K Carr, Head of Facilities, Waste and Grounds; K McCafferty, Sustainable Development Officer (Funding); C Park, Head of Roads, Transportation and Fleet Services; A Wallace, Economic Development Officer; M Wilkie, Performance and Policy Development Manager

Finance and Corporate Resources

T Little, Head of Communications and Strategy; P MacRae, Administration Adviser; K McLeod, Administration Assistant

Housing and Technical Resources

J Forbes, Head of Property Services

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee held on 20 September 2023 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Committee decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Biodiversity Duty Report 2021 to 2023

A report dated 20 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted on the Council's Biodiversity Duty Report for 2021 to 2023.

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 placed a duty on public bodies in Scotland to further the conservation of biodiversity. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 required every public body in Scotland to produce a publicly available report on compliance with the Biodiversity Duty. The reporting schedule was on a 3 yearly basis, covering activities in the preceding 3 years. The Council's next report, which was due on 31 December 2023, covered activities completed in the calendar years 2021 to 2023 inclusive.

The Council was a key member of the South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership and had produced a Biodiversity Strategy which set out an agreed framework for furthering the conservation of biodiversity in South Lanarkshire. The new Biodiversity Strategy was due early 2024.

The Biodiversity Duty Report 2021 to 2023, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, comprised the following 8 parts:-

- ◆ introduction
- ◆ governance
- ◆ actions to protect biodiversity and connect people with nature
- ◆ mainstreaming biodiversity/nature based solutions and climate change
- ◆ public engagement and workforce development
- ◆ research and monitoring
- ◆ biodiversity highlights and challenges
- ◆ contribution to biodiversity targets

If approved, the report would be submitted to the Scottish Government by the statutory deadline and published on the Council's website on 1 January 2024.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided: that the Council's statutory Biodiversity Duty Report for 2021 to 2023 be approved for submission to the Scottish Government.

[Reference: Minutes of 4 November 2020 (Paragraph 4)]

Councillors Gowland, Keatt, Lockhart and Toner joined the meeting during consideration of the above item of business

4 Public Bodies Climate Change Duties – Annual Report 2022/2023

A report dated 10 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted on the Council's annual Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Compliance report for 2022/2023, as required under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

The report contained the following 6 sections:-

- ◆ organisational profile
- ◆ governance, management and strategy
- ◆ emissions, targets and projects
- ◆ adaptation
- ◆ procurement
- ◆ validation

The purpose of each of those areas was summarised in the report.

Highlights from the 2022/2023 annual report were provided in the Executive Director's report and the annual report itself was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. If approved, the report would be published on the Council's website and submitted to the Scottish Government by the required date of 30 November 2023.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided: that the Council's annual Public Bodies Climate Change Duties report for 2022/2023 be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 9 November 2022 (Paragraph 5)]

5 Making Space for Pollinators

A report dated 10 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted providing an update on the work undertaken to expand the Council's land use for pollinators.

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 placed a duty on public bodies in Scotland to further the conservation of biodiversity. The Scottish Government Pollinator Strategy for Scotland 2017 to 2027 set out how Scotland could continue to be a place where pollinators thrived.

The Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan provided a strategic focus for conservation work with inclusions that would contribute to fulfilling the objectives of the Pollinator Strategy for Scotland, focusing on making improvements to the way the Council's land was managed.

The Making Space for Pollinators report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, was the Council's first report summarising the work undertaken over a number of years to highlight ways in which native pollinators could be supported and enhanced. Over recent years, the Council had developed and improved 155 grassland sites for pollinators. The Council's approach to grassland management to support a healthy and diverse population of pollinating species would be directed through the following objectives:-

- ◆ deliver the actions within the Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Duty Implementation Report to benefit pollinators
- ◆ continue to manage wildflower grasslands and other habitats to promote biodiversity
- ◆ define, enhance and maintain nature networks throughout South Lanarkshire for pollinators where appropriate. Promote the restoration and creation of flower rich habitats in the countryside and in urban areas, linking to neighbouring and national networks
- ◆ continue to work with partners and communities, providing training, practical activities, events and monitoring to encourage community involvement. Encourage citizen science and other volunteer projects that would add value to existing monitoring schemes
- ◆ develop demonstration sites on public land, parks and Local Nature Reserves
- ◆ support the use and development of pollinator friendly pest control methods
- ◆ recognise the importance of brownfield sites and manage those to benefit pollinators
- ◆ raise awareness of the plight of pollinators and actions needed to help reverse species decline

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

6 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

A report dated 16 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted providing an update on the status of the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) network across South Lanarkshire and the City Region.

The Council had been installing and operating public EVCI for many years, with the first chargers installed and operational in 2010. The development of a network of chargers throughout the Council area had been mainly funded through Transport Scotland's annual ChargePlace Scotland (CPS) grant, although other sources of funding had been utilised in recent years. 80 charge points were also provided as part of Project PACE during 2020/2021.

The Council's focus had been on the introduction of charging hubs, with the aim of all residents in South Lanarkshire to be living within a short distance of a hub with multiple charge points. To date, the Council had installed 153 publicly available dual outlet charge points across multiple hubs throughout the area. Appendix 1 detailed the location of charging hubs and information could be found via a website, as detailed in paragraph 3.4 to the report.

In 2021, the Department for Transport advised all local authorities of the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme. This initiative was available for local authorities to bid for funding to provide on-street electric vehicle charging points in residential streets. Following successful bids, 12 on-street residential points had been installed throughout the Council area.

During the early phases of implementation, there was an expectation by Transport Scotland that there would be no tariffs for the users of any EVCI. This was to help support a wider uptake of electric vehicles. However, the costs of the electricity consumed, along with ongoing maintenance costs, created an unsustainable pressure on Council budgets and, in November 2022, a tariff for the use of the EVCI network was introduced to cover the costs associated with operating the network.

Details of the initial charging tariff and the revised charging tariff were outlined in the report. Also detailed, was the usage since the initial charging tariff was introduced to date which showed a significant reduction.

In 2022/2023, Transport Scotland launched the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF) to support the expansion of the network. This funding covered a 4-year period, with funding for the 2022/2023 financial year allocated to developing a strategy and expansion plan. The strategy identified future infrastructure requirements, locations for new charge points and commercial options to achieve this. The Council, together with the 7 other local authorities that formed the Glasgow City Region (GCR), had pooled resources to develop individual strategies which fed into a regional report.

Over the last 6 months, a Senior Officers' Group had been guiding the next steps in terms of the GCR network expansion. This included the interpretation of feasibility reports, assessment of risk, skills and resources available, financial matters and engagement directly with the private sector.

The proposed next steps would be to explore a collaborative concessionary model and the City Region and Senior Officers' Group would:-

- ◆ actively engage with other city regions and localities that had already established joint local authority models to fully inform the process and the resources they required to establish their model
- ◆ engage with Transport Scotland to explore the use of the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF) to establish the proposed approach
- ◆ work with Scottish Futures Trust and Transport Scotland to identify the specific skills and resourcing that would be required to develop such a commercial model and set out options of where those could be secured

There followed a full discussion during which officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

7 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.