

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 2 February 2022

## **Chair:**

Councillor John Ross (ex officio)

## **Councillors Present:**

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor John Anderson, Councillor John Bradley, Councillor Robert Brown, Councillor Maureen Chalmers (Depute), Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Peter Craig, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Isobel Dorman, Councillor Joe Fagan, Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Lynsey Hamilton, Councillor Ian Harrow, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Joe Lowe, Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Monique McAdams, Councillor Jim McGuigan, Councillor Gladys Miller, Councillor Lynne Nailon, Councillor David Shearer, Councillor Jared Wark, Councillor Josh Wilson

## **Attending:**

### **Community and Enterprise Resources**

A McKinnon, Interim Executive Director; E Berry, Policy Officer; H Gourichon, Policy Development Officer (Food Development); L Hinshelwood, Sustainable Development Officer; C Reid, Grounds Adviser; J Richmond, Carbon Management 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

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## **1 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

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## **2 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee held on 3 November 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

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## **3 Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy Update – Quarter 2 2021/2022**

A report dated 12 January 2022 by the Interim Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted on the status of the actions and measures contained in the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy (SDCCS) at Quarter 2 of 2021/2022.

The Council's SDCCS covered a 5-year period from 2017 to 2022. Delivery of actions within the Strategy provided the main focus for sustainable development activity over the period and enabled the Council to fulfil its duties under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003, the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and other associated environmental legislation.

The SDCCS Action Plan for 2021/2022 contained 36 performance measures towards the Strategy's outcomes, together with 74 improvement actions. The measures were rated using a traffic light system of green, amber or red, while the improvement actions were rated using green, amber or red as well as blue which indicated that an action had been completed. Of the 36 measures within the SDCCS:-

- ◆ 6 had been achieved or were on course to be achieved (green)
- ◆ 3 had minor slippage against timescale or minor shortfall against target (amber)
- ◆ 15 would be reported later when data was available
- ◆ 12 were contextual and provided a health check for South Lanarkshire

The 3 amber measures related to household waste and recycling. There had been slippage on those performance measures for the first 2 quarters of 2021 due to the pandemic. It was anticipated that the performance measures would improve as COVID-19 restrictions eased.

Of the 74 improvement actions within the SDCCS:-

- ◆ 4 had been completed (blue)
- ◆ 46 had been achieved or were on course to be achieved (green)
- ◆ 7 had seen some minor slippage against targets (amber)
- ◆ 17 would be reported later when data was available

For the 7 amber improvement measures that had minor slippage, details were provided on management actions being taken to ensure no further slippage.

Progress on all objectives, actions and measures were contained in the Quarter 2 performance report for 2021/2022, attached as an appendix to the report.

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

*[Reference: Minutes of 28 April 2021 (Paragraph 3)]*

*Councillor Lowe left the meeting during consideration of the above item of business*

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#### **4 Good Food Strategy Update – Quarter 2, 2021/2022**

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A report dated 12 January 2022 by the Interim Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted on the status of the actions and measures contained in the Good Food Strategy at Quarter 2 of 2021/2022.

The Good Food Strategy had been approved by the Executive Committee on 4 December 2019 and covered a 5 year period from 2020 to 2025. It set out outcomes and actions organised around 6 key themes as follows:-

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| ◆ good food at home and in the community | ◆ good food growing             |
| ◆ good food in the public sector         | ◆ good food for the environment |
| ◆ good food economy                      | ◆ good food governance          |

The Good Food Strategy contained an action plan which set out specific actions to progress the objectives in the Strategy. It contained 21 performance measures towards the Strategy's outcomes together with 36 improvement actions. The measures were rated using a traffic light system of green, amber or red while the improvement actions were rated using green, amber or red as well as blue which indicated that an action had been completed. Of the 21 measures within the Strategy:-

- ◆ 9 had been achieved or were on course to be achieved (green)
- ◆ 1 had seen some minor slippage against target (amber)
- ◆ 11 would be reported later when data was available

Of the 36 improvement actions within the Strategy:-

- ◆ 1 had been completed (blue)
- ◆ 31 had been achieved or were on course to be achieved (green)
- ◆ 4 would be reported later when data was available

An update on other food related actions which had been developed but not included in the IMPROVe report, as the decision to implement them had been taken after approval of the 2021/2022 action plan, was provided and included:-

- ◆ the expansion of the Universal Free School Meals to primary 4 children
- ◆ the development of the Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme in nurseries
- ◆ summer session hubs which ran within 14 locations across South Lanarkshire for a period of 6 weeks, serving breakfast and lunch each day

Progress on all objectives, actions and measures were contained in the Quarter 2 performance report for 2021/2022, attached as an appendix to the report.

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

**The Committee decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 10 February 2021 (Paragraph 4)]*

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## **5 Scottish Government Consultation on National Litter and Flytipping Strategy**

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A report dated 12 January 2022 by the Interim Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ the current Scottish Government consultation on the National Litter and Flytipping Strategy
- ◆ the proposed South Lanarkshire Council response to be submitted to the Scottish Government

The Scottish Government had published the country's first National Litter Strategy "Towards a Litter Free Scotland: A Strategic Approach to Higher Quality Local Environments" in June 2014. A review of this Strategy had been completed in November 2019 and showed that significant progress had been made and key successes identified. It was recognised, however, that litter and flytipping still posed a significant challenge and further concerted actions were required.

The landscape within which the previous Strategy was written had evolved and a number of new policy areas were now linked to the impact of litter and flytipping. New challenges had been faced with regard to litter and flytipping during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the Scottish Government had decided the Strategy would be updated to a National Litter and Flytipping Strategy, which recognised that those were separate issues and which allowed for a tailored approach to each.

Further to the review conducted on the previous Strategy, targeted stakeholder engagement had focused on the current challenges and future priorities that required action. This consultation reflected those discussions and the proposed actions that could be taken to prevent litter and flytipping from occurring as well as measures that dealt with it when it occurred. The Council's Policy Officer (Environmental Initiatives) represented the Council on both Scottish Government working groups on litter and flytipping.

The focus of the consultation was to invite views on the planned approach to tackle litter and flytipping in Scotland. Consultation responses would inform future policy on how this could be best achieved. A copy of the Council's proposed response, which was developed incorporating views from officers within Community and Enterprise Resources, including Environmental Services, was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The final response would be sent to the Scottish Government before the consultation closed on 31 March 2022.

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

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the overview of the consultation on the National Litter and Flytipping Strategy be noted; and
- (2) that the proposed South Lanarkshire Council response to the consultation be approved for submission to the Scottish Government by 31 March 2022.

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## **6 Pesticide Free Council Motion Update**

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A report dated 12 January 2022 by the Interim Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted providing an update on issues relating to the Council's use of pesticides and herbicides.

At its meeting on 16 December 2020, the Council considered a motion proposing that it become a pesticide free Council. As a result, the Council agreed that a report be submitted to the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee to:-

- ◆ identify and audit the extent of the Council's spending on pesticides and herbicides
- ◆ explain the current pesticide and herbicide policy stating, for public information, the uses made of pesticides and herbicides by the Council and where they were currently used
- ◆ consider both the costs and efficacy of alternative weed control methods and to consider the use of pesticides and herbicides along with the feasibility of free zones in partnership with local groups, where appropriate
- ◆ consider the implications of being a pesticide free Council and whether to set a timetable for the phased elimination of pesticide and herbicide use by Council Resources and their contractors

Reports had been presented to the Committee at its meetings on 10 February 2021 and 25 August 2021 which provided updates on each of the 4 tasks and it had been agreed that a further report would be provided.

The Grounds Service had continued to review the use of glyphosate-based herbicide applications and treatments to reduce the volume being applied. An analysis of herbicide usage in 2021 indicated that there was a reduction of 9% usage compared to 2019.

As detailed previously, the Grounds Service had undertaken trials/demonstrations of 4 alternative weed control methods throughout 2021:-

- ◆ hot foam
- ◆ hot steam
- ◆ new way spray
- ◆ Mankar ultra low volume lance

Details of the findings of the trials/demonstrations over a one hectare area were provided in Appendix 1 to the report. The trials had not identified any suitable replacement that could be used across all land types and this had made it impossible for accurate evaluation of the financial implications.

To ensure best practice was being followed, the Grounds Service had attended the annual Amenity Forum conference in October 2021. The conference provided detailed insight in relation to alternative methods, had confirmed that the areas being considered were appropriate, and reinforced the view that integrated approaches to weed control were likely to be the best way forward. The report also provided information on new legislation which would be detailed in the new 5-year National Action Plan on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides, which aimed to minimise the risks and impacts of pesticides to human health and the environment.

Before further significant changes were implemented, it was considered beneficial to await the outcomes of the Scottish Government led Weed Control Survey and the new National Action Plan on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides, to ensure changes to Service were in alignment with national strategies.

In preparation for the new legislation, in the current year, the Service proposed to:-

- ◆ continue to review how and where glyphosate-based products were applied, targeting a further 10% reduction in 2022
- ◆ continue to explore opportunities to expand the use of the hot foam alternative
- ◆ investigate opportunities to introduce the Mankar ultra low volume lance alternative in some areas
- ◆ continue to investigate alternative methods of control following 2 further options being identified through attendance at Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE)/Amenity Forum events with demonstrations planned for 2022
- ◆ investigate an accurate method of evaluating environmental impact of all options to allow comparison
- ◆ continue to participate in the Amenity Forum and work with colleagues in other authorities and APSE to implement best practice
- ◆ consult with residents of South Lanarkshire with a view to agreeing at least 1 pilot herbicide free area to allow evaluation of the impact and views of residents

An update report on the impact of pilots/changes made in 2022 would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

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

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) that the next steps, as detailed in section 7 of the report, be approved.

*[Reference: Minutes of South Lanarkshire Council of 16 December 2020 (Paragraph 7) and Minutes of 10 February 2021 (Paragraph 5) and 25 August 2021 (Paragraph 8)]*

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## 7 Clyde Peatland Action

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A joint report dated 12 January 2022 by the Interim Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) and the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on a proposal that the Council host 2 posts, on behalf of the City Region, to contribute to the restoration of damaged peatlands and to Net Zero targets. This would result in a proposed increase to the Resource's staffing establishment within the Facilities, Waste and Grounds Service of 2 Peatland Officer posts for a fixed term period of 23 months, fully funded by NatureScot.

The climate and ecological emergencies had brought into sharp focus the key role that peatland restoration played in the drive for Net Zero, climate change adaptation, and in arresting and reversing the decline of priority wildlife habitat. Glasgow City Region had around 56,000 hectares of peatland, largely in upland areas that surrounded the Glasgow conurbation and the Clyde Valley. Around two thirds of that peatland was found in South Lanarkshire.

Currently, there was no dedicated resource to drive the role of peatland in the City Region's response to Climate Change. In recognition of this, the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership (GCVGNP) had secured approval from NatureScot's Peatland Action Team for 2 new fully funded Peatland Officer posts with differing roles and remits.

Clyde Peatland Action was a new initiative which aimed to bring about a step change in the rate and scale of peatland restoration across the Glasgow City Region. Delivery of this aim would make a significant contribution to reaching Scotland's Net Zero carbon target by 2045 and would address the ecological crisis through positive management of a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat.

To deliver on the objectives of Clyde Peatland Action, it was proposed that the following posts be added to the establishment of the Facilities Waste and Grounds Service, as detailed in section 4 of the report:-

- ◆ one post of Strategic Peatland Officer on Grade 3, Level 2 (£33,651 to £34,618) on a 23-month fixed term contract
- ◆ one post of Community Peatland Officer on Grade 2, Level 2 to 3 (£23,942 to £26,953) on a 23-month fixed term contract

The posts would be fully funded by NatureScot for a period of 23 months. Office accommodation and day to day line management of the officers would be provided by the Council. The proposed remits for the posts were detailed in the report

Officers:-

- ◆ responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report
- ◆ undertook to circulate a list of the 52 areas targeted for peatland restoration within South Lanarkshire

### **The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the report be noted; and
- (2) that the establishment of the Facilities Waste and Grounds Service be increased by the addition of:-
  - ◆ one post of Strategic Peatland Officer on Grade 3, Level 2 (£33,651 to £34,618) on a 23-month fixed term contract
  - ◆ one post of Community Peatland Officer on Grade 2, Level 2 to 3 (£23,942 to £26,953) on a 23-month fixed term contract

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## 8 COVID-19 Memorial – Tree Planting

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A report dated 12 January 2022 by the Interim Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted providing an update on the COVID-19 memorial tree planting project.

As part of the 2021/2022 Revenue Budget, £300,000 had been allocated to the Food Strategy Support Fund to promote alternative food growing in the Council area. The Committee had approved the planting of fruit trees in 13 locations across South Lanarkshire at its meeting on 25 August 2021 as a memorial to those who had passed away due to COVID-19.

In addition to recognising, on a local basis, those who had passed away as a result of COVID-19, the proposal would:-

- ◆ highlight the importance of tree planting for the environment and future generations
- ◆ increase the level of tree canopy cover in South Lanarkshire as well as the overall environmental, social and economic benefits of tree planting
- ◆ complement the work of the Council's biodiversity actions
- ◆ link directly with the aims of the Food Growing Strategy and action plan

The Grounds Service had worked with the Procurement Team to source 800 trees which were delivered in late November 2021. As previously agreed, dates had been arranged with local members and community groups to plant the orchards in December 2021. The 13 locations were detailed in Appendix 1 of the report. During discussions with local groups, 2 alternative locations had been identified and trees were planted at:-

- ◆ Biggar Burnbraes Park instead of Biggar Park
- ◆ Lanark Moor instead of Lanark Loch

The Grounds Service would continue to monitor the sites during 2022 and would ensure that, where required, any remedial work, such as replacing tree guards or tree stakes, was undertaken. It would take 1 to 2 seasons for the orchards to become established before communities would harvest fruit. Discussions would take place with food groups and local schools/communities in relation to harvesting the fruit.

Members thanked officers for their efforts in planting the memorial sites and stressed the importance of promoting local ownership of the sites.

**The Committee decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 25 August 2021 (Paragraph 6)]*

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## 9 Urgent Business

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There were no items of urgent business.