

**Climate Change – Strategic Outline Programme**

The Council considered a report by the Director Infrastructure Services (ISD-01-20-F) regarding actions taken to date in respect of the Council's response to Climate Change and the Climate Change Strategic Outline Programme and Initiation Documentation, and seeking approval of funding requirements.

The Leader advised that the report had been the subject of substantive discussions at both the Environment and Transport Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee, and it had been agreed that the recommendations in the report be approved. He thanked officers for the work that had taken place in preparing the report, and Shetland Climate Action for their deputation.

He went on to say that the position coming across was the need for action at all levels, now that the 'tipping point' had been reached. The report itself contained a range of recommendations and actions, but there was a need to acknowledge that the Council did not have all the answers. However the Council had illustrated its commitment in identifying actions going forward and acknowledging the need to resource these. The Council had committed £250,000 to the project because it saw it as a priority, and should focus on what it could actually do itself as there were many external influences it could not effect. It was important that the Council ensured that the Plan was communicated to the community, and that the community engaged with it so that actions could be taken. He credited the people who were taking the message to the community and highlighted the importance of working in partnership with the community, government, the public sector and industry. There was a lot of work that required to be done in order to get to a situation where everyone felt that they had a role to play.

He went on to move that the recommendations in the report be approved, with the addition that "As a Council, it recognised the global climate emergency. The evidence is irrefutable and the science is clear and action is required. The Council must demonstrate community leadership and must act and engage with the community to ensure that Shetland can and does play its fair and just role in tackling this global emergency".

Mr Thomson seconded.

During the discussion that followed, it was commented that the Council had external partners that it would have to deal with sensitively. The hydrocarbon sector was looking at ways of offsetting its carbon footprint, and multinationals were also now taking cognisance of this.

It was noted that the Council's ferry fleet was responsible for 50% of carbon emissions in Shetland, so a move towards 'greener' ferries and fixed links would play a major role in cutting these emissions. It was not possible to simply stop running ferries, so it was important to get the Scottish Government on board to take responsibility in helping to achieve this reduction in emissions.

However it was also felt that it was important that the Council was ambitious and led by example, as community leadership and partnership working was required in order to ensure the Council could meet its responsibilities. It was acknowledged that there were limitations as to what the Council itself could deliver, but it could ensure that climate change was acknowledged and placed at the forefront of decision-making. It already had a good record in doing so because of the stringent rules it had put in place in the past to prevent marine pollution. It would be necessary to prioritise resources towards things that would make a difference, and this would require some difficult choices. It was suggested that should the Scottish Government require local authorities to declare a climate emergency, it would need to provide additional resources to support this.

It was also commented that while the Council had recognised it was living beyond its financial means, it was also living beyond its means in terms of natural resources. It was important that careful actions were taken, as it would be a mistake to swap from one energy source to another that would be even more devastating.

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**Decision:**

The Council:

- **NOTED** the actions taken to date in respect of Shetland Islands Council's response to Climate Change, through the existing Carbon Management Plan, and associated activity.
- **CONSIDERED** the information provided in the Climate Change, Strategic Outline Programme (Appendix 1) and the Climate Change Programme Initiation Documentation (Appendix 2) and **COMMENTED** on these documents.
- **ENDORSED** the objectives and Critical Success Factors set out in the Strategic Outline Programme (Appendix 1) and Programme Initiation Documentation (Appendix 2), and in particular confirmed:
  - The need for shared action across all levels of government, businesses, communities and individuals to address the risks presented by Climate Change
  - That Shetland Islands Council will adopt a proactive and collaborative approach to Climate Change, emphasising planned partnership action, with the Council providing leadership on behalf of the Shetland community
  - The critical need for all plans and actions to recognise current inequalities, which result in Shetland residents experiencing some of the highest levels of fuel poverty and transport costs in the United Kingdom; and to ensure Just Transition solutions address these energy affordability problems, as well as reducing emissions

- The significant number of jobs in Shetland involved in the energy sector; and the importance that Just Transition solutions also recognise the need for employment transition in communities such as ours, as well as reducing emissions
- **ENDORSED** the initial governance arrangements set out in that Strategic Outline Programme (Appendix 1) and Programme Initiation Document (Appendix 2); through the Chief Executive, the Council's Corporate Management Team and the Council's senior political office bearers.
- **ENDORSED** that the continuing work of the Carbon Management Plan should be built upon through:
  - the continuation, and where possible, the acceleration of current energy efficiency, energy conversion, waste reduction and waste reuse initiatives, internally within the Council, and across the Shetland community
  - the review and analysis of key Council and Partnership Plans and strategies for recommended critical path Climate Change actions
  - the further development of an integrated Shetland Climate Change Action Plan which co-ordinates activity
  - the reporting of recommendations from the Shetland Climate Change Action Plan to Shetland Islands Council in line with the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan which is anticipated in March / April 2020, and periodically thereafter
- **ENDORSED** a review of guidance for the Environmental Implications section of committee reports to clarify the need to report Climate Change implications clearly.
- **APPROVED** the funding requirement at paragraph 6.5 from the Council's Change Fund and **ENDORSED** a review of the arrangements for the Council's Change Fund to understand how the Change Fund can best be utilised to support this matter.
- **THANKED** Shetland Climate Action for their petition lodged with the Council on 3 October 2019 (pages 1 – 4 attached as Appendix 3 - full petition listing all signatories is available to Members upon request). The Council has also had informal representations on this issue, particularly from young people and environmental groups, but also from individual constituents and community councils. The content of the petition, and other representations, align with much of the Climate Change work that the Council has embarked on, and the further actions recommended in this Strategic Outline Programme (Appendix 1). Further information on that alignment is set out in 4.12 – 4.17 of this report.

- **NOTED** that local emission reduction targets, for the Council estate and services, and for Shetland as a whole, will be evaluated as an early activity within the Programme, and be reported to Shetland Islands Council. This review and establishment of local targets will fully involve agency, commercial and community partners.

The Council **AGREED** that as a Council, it recognised the global climate emergency. The evidence is irrefutable and the science is clear and action is required. The Council must demonstrate community leadership and must act and engage with the community to ensure that Shetland can and does play its fair and just role in tackling this global emergency.