

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy and Resources
DATE	20 th September 2017
REPORT TITLE	Public Bodies Duties Climate Change Report 2016/2017
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/144
DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
REPORT AUTHOR	Amy Gray

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve the mandatory Public Bodies Duties Climate Change Report submission to the Scottish Government to ensure compliance with the requirements of Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The report is due for submission by 30th November 2017 covering the financial year 2016/2017.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that committee:
- a. Approve the submission of the Public Bodies Duties Climate Change Report as set out within the appendices to Scottish Government.
 - b. Authorise the Chief Executive to sign off the submission.
 - c. Instruct the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development to report back to this Committee in early 2018 with an action plan to improve performance and reporting.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Public sector organisations are required to report on progress against Public Bodies Duties annually. This relates to reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions (mitigation), adapting to the impacts of a changing climate (adaptation) and having sustainable development as a core value (acting sustainably).
- 3.2 The report follows a standardised reporting methodology to allow the collection of consistent and accurate information and to enable comparison. The report requires that organisations demonstrate a commitment to tackling climate change, managing climate risks, improving performance reporting and reducing emissions whilst setting an example. The primary function of the report is to monitor performance against legislative requirements and our own relevant corporate plans, policies and strategies. This information is made publically available and should provide information in a transparent and accountable manner. The report can help to identify areas of best practice

and areas for improvement in order to support future decision making. The report has two sections: “Required” and “Recommended”.

- 3.3 The “Required” section (Appendix 1) provides evidence of corporate climate change governance, internal waste, business travel, street lighting, council building utilities, water and projects focusing upon efforts to reduce emissions at a corporate level. In addition it provides information on adaptation and sustainable procurement. The “Recommended” section (Appendix 2) reflects the influential functions that the Council has in supporting efforts on climate change mitigation and adaptation city-wide, beyond its estate boundary. The “Recommended” section should document relevant achievements not reported within the “Required” section and include evidence relating to communication and partnership working.
- 3.4 The Scottish Government expect all reports to be published prior to submission and that validation of quantitative and qualitative information is regarded as good practice. The Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) expects all reports to be approved by the person with senior responsibility.
- 3.5 This year’s submission shows a reduction in overall emissions when compared to previous reporting periods. It should be noted that differences in emissions are attributed to changes in the scope of the submission (what is and isn’t included), more accurate data collection and emission factor usage, changes in estate and implementation of measures.

Reporting period	Overall emissions (tCO ₂ e)
2014/2015	44993
2015/2016	46371
2016/2017	39225

- 3.6 The most notable savings have been within building management and street lighting. Other areas such as travel, fleet and waste have seen an increase in emissions. Time needs to be taken to review performance against previous reporting periods to identify areas for improvement and to understand performance better.
- 3.7 Consideration should be given to assigning the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development the responsibility to undertake continual review. They will be required to present an action plan back to committee to improve performance and reporting in early 2018.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct budget implications arising from the completion of the report, which simply illustrates a point in time as to how the Council is performing. The compilation of the report has been undertaken through existing service budgets and staff allocations.
- 4.2 However, it should be noted that the report shows the Council is improved its performance slightly. This could be down to measures taken or differences between data capture between this reporting period and other years. It should be noted that any increase in emissions could have repercussions on revenue budgets and any fiscal penalties associated with emissions e.g. Carbon Reduction Commitment.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Failure to report and show continual improvement to emissions reduction, adaptation to climate change and acting sustainably could result in non-compliance with:

- the requirements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, part 4. Public Bodies Duties require the Council to act:
 - in the way best calculated to contribute to delivery of the Act's emission reduction targets of 42% by 2020 and 80% by 2050;
 - in the best way calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programme. *Climate Ready Scotland*, the Scottish Adaptation Programme was approved in 2014; and
 - in the way it considers most sustainable.
- the requirements of individual topic specific pieces of legislation of which there are many.
- Council corporate policy, such as:
 - The Regional Economic Strategy – relating to innovation, investment in infrastructure and sustained and secure wellbeing of the city.
 - Aligning to the themes, priorities and drivers of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.
 - The goals within the Strategic Business Plan.
 - The Building Performance Policy.
 - Sustainable Procurement Guidance Note 10.

5.2 As mentioned within the financial implications sections, there is likely to be increased costs associated with fiscal penalties.

5.3 At present it is not known how the impact of Brexit will affect such legislation.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

6.1 Financial (low risk)

6.1.1 There are no financial risks associated with the actual report. However there are financial risks associated with not taking measures to reduce emissions as mentioned previously. This may have an impact on revenue and maintenance budgets and fiscal penalties. Such consideration needs to be factored into corporate decision making.

6.2 Environmental (low risk)

6.2.1 In regards to producing the report, the impact on the environment is minimal. Impact will be felt through the actions of the Council and how the city operates e.g. increases in emissions might result in reduced air quality, impact on health and well-being, increasing fuel costs affecting those within fuel poverty for example. These impacts are monitored through multiple plans, policies and strategies across Council activities.

6.3 Technological (low risk)

6.3.1 In regards to producing the report, the technological risk is minimal. Measures should be taken to address better performance reporting.

6.3.2 It should be noted that there are opportunities whereby technological and digital transformation can enable better data capture, reporting and subsequently using that information through intelligent systems to improve performance. This will be captured through the wider service review that is under commission.

6.4 Employee (medium risk)

6.4.1 To improve future reporting, the development of streamlined and robust procedures and processes to gather accurate information will be required. To improve procedures and processes the Environmental Policy team can provide limited support to relevant service area officers to identify and support data capture; subject to workload prioritisation. However, the onus is upon service areas themselves to improve their reporting methodologies. It should be noted that this may become a resource issue for areas where such reporting is not deemed a priority.

6.5 Customer / Citizen (low risk)

6.5.1 In regards to producing the report, the impact on customers / citizens is minimal. Impact will be felt through how the city operates e.g. increases in emissions might result in reduced air quality, impact on health and well-being, increasing fuel costs affecting those within fuel poverty for examples. These impacts are monitored through multiple plans, policies and strategies across Council activities.

6.6 Reputational (low to medium risk)

6.6.1 There is the potential for negative reputational impact if the Council's performance is poor when compared against similar organisations, or show's no or little improvement against the previous year's performance.

6.6.2 All reports are made publically available through both our own corporate website and that of the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN). The information may be of interest to certain stakeholders in relation to how the Council is performing in reducing emissions, adapting to the impacts of a changing climate and complying with the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

6.6.3 Communications will be advised of the reports outcomes and when it is publically available so they can deal with any related inquiries. It is envisaged that this could be a low to medium risk dependent upon Freedom of Information requests, media interest and public enquiry on the topic.

7. IMPACT SECTION

7.1 Publication of the report will have limited impact upon people, place, technology and the economy. The impact upon these areas will likely be felt through either the lack of action or actions arising from measures to improve performance by reducing emissions and adapting to changing weather patterns, which this paper does not discuss. Such issues would be considered at the individual project level.

7.2 Completing a report is a matter of data collection and information gathering. This has little impact upon external customers aside from those responsible for reporting upon public sector emissions, for example SSN.

- 7.3 There is a requirement for internal stakeholder involvement in the provision and verification of data. This covers many areas of Council operation including corporate governance, internal waste, travel, utilities, procurement, adaptation and project management. This is obtained from many service areas across the Council. Officers and Heads of Service are requested to provide this data and information in a specified format and in a timely manner; providing raw data, details of assumptions and methodologies, information on projects and commentary.
- 7.4 Over the past two years such requests have been made as and when guidance and clarification has been obtained from the SSN on reporting requirements. It is hoped that this process can be streamlined through implementation and improved information gathering processes and procedures. This would help Officers and Heads of Service to better understand their roles and responsibilities within this process and ensure that they are accommodated within future service and workload planning.
- 7.5 The report can be a management tool to improve corporate, cross-directorate working, challenging the inefficiencies inherent from stand-alone working and promoting joint working internally across Council services, as well as wider across the city.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- CHI/16/162 – 1st November 2016¹

9. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Required reporting
- Appendix 2 – Recommended reporting

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¹ <http://councilcommittees.acc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=503&MId=3877&Ver=4>