

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Net Zero, Environment and Transport
DATE	27 March 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Net Zero Aberdeen & Aberdeen Adapts: Annual Report 2023/24
REPORT NUMBER	COM/24/091
DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	David Dunne
REPORT AUTHOR	Emma Young
TERMS OF REFERENCE	5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to committee on progress of city collaborative place-based climate change work; in line with the objectives of the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Aberdeen Adapts: Climate Adaptation Framework.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee :-

- 2.1 Note the summary of key collaborative actions progressed in 2023/24;
- 2.2 Endorse the content of the Appendix A - Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts Summary of Progress 2023/24.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Background

- 3.1 The Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap (2022) sets out a pathway towards the City of Aberdeen achieving net zero by 2045. It is supported by six Enabling Strategies on key themes including Mobility, Buildings and Heat, Circular Economy, Energy Supply, Natural Environment and Empowerment. The Aberdeen Adapts: Climate Adaptation Framework (2022) is the city-wide climate adaptation framework, preparing for and building resilience to the impacts of climate change. It should be noted that Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts were co-created and will be co-delivered. Appendix A represents progress on actions from a range of collaborators.

- 3.2 In February 2022, Council instructed the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to report back on an annual basis on progress towards the objectives of both Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Aberdeen Adapts. An initial annual report was brought to the Net Zero, Environment and Transport committee in May 2023 (COM/23/129 – Net Zero Aberdeen Workplan), including progress during the 2022/23 period and an indicative workplan for 2023/24.
- 3.3 Progress on key milestones in the Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts workplan for 2023/24 are included in the below sections. Dates included in the workplan have been revised since the indicative workplan, this is due to the collaborative nature of the work which involves external organisations and stakeholders.

Governance

- 3.4 In February 2023, Council agreed the following in relation to governance of Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts:
- Appoint an elected member as Chair of the Net Zero and Adaptation Board for a period of 12 months in the first instance.
 - Instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning, following consultation with the appointed Chair of the Net Zero and Adaptation Board, to invite additional external members to the Board to reflect the range of net zero and adaptation themes for Aberdeen.
- 3.5 The Vice-Convener of the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee has been appointed as Chair of the Net Zero and Adaptation Board for an initial period of 12 months.
- 3.6 The Terms of Reference for the refreshed Net Zero and Adaptation Board included expanded membership with more balanced representation across multiple sectors including Energy, Skills/Industry, Further Education, Mobility, Built Environment/Infrastructure, Natural Environment and increased Third sector, Community and Youth representation.

Officers engaged with the Chair in establishing a list of potential participants and stakeholders to represent each sector and narrow down this list to select the representatives. Invitations were sent out directly to the refreshed Aberdeen Net Zero and Adaptation Board by the Chair of Board in December 2023. There is ongoing dialogue with board invitees and a deadline has been set for responses by 8th March 2024. Officers will update this committee once full membership of the Board is confirmed.

- 3.7 Following invitation of Board Members to the refreshed Aberdeen Net Zero and Adaptation Board, a first meeting of the refreshed Net Zero and Adaptation Board will be scheduled for Spring 2024. The objectives of this meeting will be to:
- Elect a Vice-Chair of the Board
 - Set direction for city-wide climate projects for the upcoming year

- Schedule its work programme for 2024-2025

Data, monitoring, and reporting 2023/24

- 3.8 A Climate Intelligence Service (CIS) has been established by the Improvement Service and Edinburgh Climate Change Institute to build council capacity and capability in local authority area wide emissions and provide data-informed evidence to support continuous improvement of local authority climate action plans. Council officers have participated in User Group Workshops to involve the development of this service and an officer sits on the Scottish Climate Intelligence Service Programme Board.

At time of reporting initial outputs from CIS are in development, including Local Authority area wide emission data sets; and procurement of a data platform to support the design, management and delivery of action plans for area-wide emissions reduction in local authority areas.

- 3.9 Scottish Government is producing Statutory Guidance to support the public sector in meeting climate duties, due to be published March 2025, indications are that the guidance will also include information for local authorities on area wide emissions.
- 3.10 The Council participates in the Adaptation Scotland Public Sector Climate Adaptation Network sharing knowledge with other Public Bodies around climate adaptation and resilience. An annual review of adaptation progress using the Adaptation Scotland Public Sector Adaptation Benchmarking tool was completed in 2023/24.
- 3.11 The Council Climate Change Report was approved at the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee on 31 October 2023. In addition to the statutory section which includes emissions data and updates on progress relevant to Council assets and operations; the report included a recommended section on area-based emissions and Council partnership contributions to area-based emissions for the 2022/23 period.

Key Council and Council partnership place-based net zero and adaptation activity related to the 2023/24 reporting period will be included within the Council Climate Change Report to be submitted November 2024.

Circular Economy project programme 2023/24

- 3.12 One of the key work items included within the 2023/24 workplan was to develop a Circular Economy project programme, to support the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Circular Economy Strategy. Following an initial series of three online Circular Economy stakeholder workshops in March 2023, a summary report was published covering the workshop outcomes. The workshops were carried out in partnership with Zero Waste Scotland and an external facilitator Circle Indigo, to review and work on the city-wide approach to a circular

economy, as part of the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Circular Economy Strategy. The purpose of the three workshops was:

- To understand the circular economy, its benefits, and the important role of cities in driving transition
- To understand the strategic context within Aberdeen (linking to the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Circular Economy Strategy)
- To identify opportunities to integrate circular economy into existing projects and programmes of work
- To identify opportunities for new circular economy projects and programmes
- To prioritise actions and projects to take forward.

The report (created by the workshop facilitator) is publicly available on the Net Zero Aberdeen website here: [NZA Sprint Workshops - Output Report - March 2023.pdf \(aberdeencity.gov.uk\)](https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/NZA_Sprint_Workshops_-_Output_Report_-_March_2023.pdf).

The report contains details of ongoing circular economy projects identified during the workshops, potential circular economy project ideas for the city, and linked potential barriers, as identified by the workshop participants. The appendix of the workshop report contains the full participant and workshop outputs, captured verbatim for each workshop. The output report has driven further dialogue with Zero Waste Scotland regarding opportunities for stakeholder engagement on the Circular Economy in the region and participation in development of further engagement activities.

- 3.13 A Circular Economy Business Officer was in place from April 2023 to March 2024, in a regional shared role between Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Business Gateway. The Circular Economy Business Officer worked with businesses to provide circular economy support, establish connections between businesses, carry out awareness raising presentations, and delivered a regional Circular Economy Business Insights Survey. There is ongoing dialogue with Zero Waste Scotland in relation to city and regional circular economy opportunities.

Communication Plan and Engagement 2023/24

- 3.14 Communication blocks were carried out as planned throughout the 2023/24 period. These included:
- During Scotland's Climate Week (25 September to 01 October 2023) the Council ran a campaign of five social media posts with topics including; promoting Scotland's Climate Week, actions the Council are taking, and how to vote for projects to receive funding from the Just Transition Participatory Budgeting Fund. These posts reached 3,700 users.
 - During the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 28) (30 November to 12 December 2023) – a Council social media post highlighted COP28 and promoted Aberdeen's net zero and adaptation plans, reaching 826 users.
 - A programme of regional climate events coordinated by North East Scotland Climate Action Network (NESCAN) Hub. For Climate Week North East (24

March to 02 April 2023) – the Council contributed 11 events to the programme, including litter picks, webinars, and tours of facilities. A campaign of 32 social media posts were issued promoting the Council events, and wider Climate Week North East programme, reaching a total of 24,300 users.

- 3.15 Net Zero Aberdeen received the following awards during the 2023-24 period:
- June 2023 - "Best Plan" award win at the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Scotland Awards for Planning Excellence.
 - November 2023 - "Excellence in Plan Making" category at the UK RTPI Awards.
- 3.16 The Aberdeen Climate and Nature Pledge is a commitment by the organisations and people of the City of Aberdeen to act within their own organisations and lives to contribute towards the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Aberdeen Adapts climate adaptation framework. Further promotion of the Aberdeen Climate and Nature Pledge was carried out during the 2023/24 period, alongside ongoing administration of new signatories and the Net Zero Aberdeen website, which hosts the Pledge alongside city climate strategies, news and information. There are currently 100 signatories of the Aberdeen Climate and Nature Pledge, including 30 organisations and 70 individuals/households.
- 3.17 The Council hosted a number of project placements, in summer 2023, for University of Aberdeen students undertaking the MSc Sustainability Transitions course.

This included a project in relation to the Aberdeen Climate and Nature Pledge which looked at learning from similar pledge schemes. The project included desk-based research and 17 interviews (with professionals from business, communities, climate change, technology, academia), and provided an executive summary and presentation with potential options and suggested solutions for further development and expansion of the Pledge scheme.

A research project was also undertaken to investigate how to add blue and green infrastructure to low-income housing areas in Aberdeen City. The research identified key strategies for adding blue and green infrastructure, involving the community, aligning with sustainability goals, and following policy guidance. The research interviewed 44 residents, finding that they value the existing green spaces, but are not aware of retrofitting options. However, they are interested in retrofitting benefits such as improved air quality, stormwater management, and biodiversity. The research proposed a possible retrofit including different green infrastructure elements, such as grass pavers, rain gardens, vegetated swales, tree planting and a wildflower meadow.

- 3.18 Further activity was carried out to engage children and young people in city-wide climate and nature activity, and to integrate the themes of Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts into wider work including:

- The development of the Child Friendly Placemaking Project. The output of this project (approved by Council 08 February 2024) is a series of four animations to engage children and young people on the key themes and elements of city-wide strategies; including the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Enabling Strategies, and Aberdeen Adapts Framework. The key themes of the climate strategies have been integrated into the animations which were developed in collaboration with young people.
- Election of the second Youth Climate President and Youth Climate Council, and invitation of the Youth Climate President to represent the Youth Climate Council on the Aberdeen Net Zero and Adaptation Board.

3.19 Officers responded to a number of national consultations in relation to net zero and adaptation context; and a number of national enquiries around the public sector and climate change. These include the Scottish Government Draft Energy Strategy & Just Transition Plan Consultation, Call for views - Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill, Scotland's draft Circular Economy and Waste Routemap to 2030, Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill, and Tackling the Nature Emergency Consultation.

Infographic summary

3.20 A summary of 2023/24 city-wide climate change activity is shown in Appendix A - Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts Summary of Progress 2023/24. This contains key information highlighting collaborative work carried out by stakeholders across the city against the objectives of the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap, the six Enabling Strategies, and the Aberdeen Adapts Framework during the 2023/24 reporting period. These are set out under headings of; Circular Economy, Buildings & Heat, Mobility, Energy Supply, Natural Environment, Adaptation & Resilience, and Empowerment & Communication. The content of this document is intended to be presented as a short infographic, to be developed through a design process after the indicative content is approved.

As governance, data collation and monitoring mature this will build a more comprehensive picture of net zero and adaptation actions. The Aberdeen Net Zero and Adaptation Board will be involved in the monitoring of city-wide projects that will inform future annual summaries.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Work towards emission reduction targets under Net Zero Aberdeen and adaptation goals under Aberdeen Adapts contributes to the Council's and other public bodies duties under Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The recommendations in this report will support monitoring of place-based climate actions and help to inform stakeholders on progress towards the delivery of city net zero targets and climate resilience activities as set out in the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Aberdeen Adapts: Climate Adaptation Framework.

7. RISK

The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Failure where the Council has scope of influence to contribute to place-based targets for Net Zero and adaptation goals.	Monitoring against the Work plan established for 2023-24.	L	Yes
Compliance	Failure to align with and contribute to the delivery of national targets/ programmes.	Monitoring and review of emerging legislation	M	Yes
Operational	Failure to monitor progress.	Engagement in the development of climate project and scenario tools to support future improvements, and	L	Yes

		monitoring of national activity.		
Financial	No direct financial risk.			Yes
Reputational	Failure to support place-based climate plans and targets.	Approved governance. Communication Plan and Council Core Co-ordination Group in place for place-based climate work.	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	Risk to the delivery of Net Zero Aberdeen & Aberdeen Adapts.	Ongoing support for the delivery of collaborative place-based climate work programmes.	M	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to deliver a just transition to net zero and plan to make Aberdeen a net-zero city • Support efforts to move towards a circular economy • Improving cycle and active transport infrastructure
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 13. Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate. The paper seeks approval for an indicative net zero workplan which supports the LOIP key driver 13.1 Reducing emissions across the city through delivery of Aberdeen's Net Zero Vision & Routemap.
Regional and City Strategies	The proposals within this report support the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap; Net Zero Buildings and Heat Strategy; Net Zero Energy Supply Strategy; Net Zero Mobility Strategy; Net Zero Circular Economy Strategy; Net Zero Natural Environment Strategy;

	Net Zero Empowerment Strategy; Aberdeen Adapts: Climate Adaptation Framework.
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [COM/23/054](#) Climate Change (Place) Governance Proposals
- 10.2 [CFS/23/084](#) 2022 Education Climate Change Report
- 10.3 [COM/23/129](#) Net Zero Aberdeen Workplan
- 10.4 [COM/23/329](#) Climate Change Report 2022-23

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A - Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts Summary of Progress 2023/24

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