

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Net Zero, Environment and Transport
DATE	18 November 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Council Climate and Nature Reporting 2024/25
REPORT NUMBER	CR&E/25/250
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	David Dunne
REPORT AUTHOR	Bishnu Bhattarai / Lina-Elvira Back
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this committee report is to seek approval for a) the new combined Council Climate and Nature Summary 2024/25 (CCNS) - a non-technical report on related Council activity over the period, and b) the Climate Change Duties Report (CCR) - a technical, statutory return for the same period; the latter being required under Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Approve the Council Climate and Nature Summary 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix 1;
- 2.2 Approve the Climate Change Duties Report 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix 2;
- 2.3 Instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to submit the Climate Change Duties Report to Scottish Government prior to the reporting deadline of 30 November 2025;
- 2.4 Instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to complete design of the Council Climate and Nature Summary , and publish both Reports on the Council's website; and
- 2.5 Instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to report back to this Committee with a Climate and Nature Summary alongside the statutory return on an annual basis.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Background: About Climate and Nature Action & Reporting

- 3.1 Aberdeen City Council has statutory duties to act on both climate change and nature loss (also referred to as biodiversity loss) and to report on its activities related to each. Until now, the Council has consistently collated and submitted the required statutory reports. However, it has been recognised that the timelines and reporting periods for these statutory reports do not align and some aspects can be very technical and inaccessible to many. Therefore, this year the Council has undertaken to create its first combined Council Climate and Nature Summary 2024/25 (CCNS) - to ensure that these matters are made more accessible (non-technical), cover the same reporting periods and are considered alongside one another.

For clarity, an outline of Climate and Nature Reporting is as follows:

- **Council Climate and Nature Summary**
A new annual, high-level and non-technical summary report. Outlining Council specific activities predominantly, but not exclusively, related to the current Council Climate Change Plan 2021-2025 (to evolve into a Council Climate & Nature Plan in future years) (see Appendix 1);
- **Net Zero & Aberdeen Adapts Annual Report**
A relatively new annual, high-level and non-technical summary report. Outlining the activities of the Council and partners collaborating under the citywide plans of Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Aberdeen Adapts (refer to 10.5 for link to previous reports)
- **Climate Change Duties Report**
The Council's statutory annual, technical climate change return to the Scottish Government (see Appendix 2)
- **Biodiversity Duty Report**
The Council's statutory three yearly biodiversity return to the Scottish Government (refer to 10.6 for link to previous report).

Climate Change Duties and Reporting Duty

- 3.2 The Council has a statutory duty under the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 to report annually on progress made against the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties outlined in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

These duties are to:

- Act in the way best calculated to contribute to the Act's emission reduction targets (net zero by 2045);
- Act in the way best calculated to deliver Scotland's statutory adaptation programme (Scottish National Adaptation Plan – SNAP3);
- Acting in a way that is deemed to be the most sustainable.

The Climate Change Duties Report (CCR) (Appendix 2) follows a standardised reporting methodology, and must be submitted to the Scottish Government annually by 30 November via the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN). The

statutory CCR must be publicly accessible and provide information transparently and accountably, in accordance with the relevant guidance.

Biodiversity Duties and Reporting Duty

- 3.3 The Council also has a statutory duty to report every three years under the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 on progress made against the Council's Biodiversity Duty outlined in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

This Duty is "to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities". This biodiversity duty is about taking care of nature all around us, not just in specific protected sites and for particular species. The next report will be in 2026.

Data, monitoring, and reporting 2024-25

- 3.4 In March 2021, the Council approved the Council Climate Change Plan, which established a target of achieving net zero emissions by the year 2045. The Plan outlines measures for reducing emissions, enhancing climate resilience for Council assets and operations and addressing biodiversity issues. A summary of progress from the fourth year (1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025) of implementing the Council Climate Change Plan can be found in the Council Climate and Nature Summary 2024/25 (Appendix 1).
- 3.5 The Council's emissions data is collated for the CCR and reported as tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e). Emissions are calculated based on consumption data, such as kilometres travelled, and are converted using emission factors released annually by the UK Government's Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The baseline year for reporting is set as 2015/16. An annual carbon budget reflects the scope of the baseline year and supports monitoring of progress of the Council Climate Change Plan and the reduction trajectory needed to meet emission targets.
- 3.6 Input on the natural environment is gathered from each relevant service in the Council and a Nature Data and Indicators project was set-up to identify suitable nature data and indicators to support our understanding and to act as means to measure related changes.

Future Challenges

- 3.7 The Council Climate and Nature Summary 2024/25 (CCNS) and the statutory Climate Change Duties Report (CCR) highlight a range of successful measures. However, evolving legislative drivers continue to influence climate and nature planning, monitoring and reporting at both City and Council level:
- The introduction of a carbon budgeting approach in Scotland has set carbon targets (in October 2025) for 5-year periods, acknowledging year on year emissions reductions are subject to short term fluctuations. Statutory Guidance for Public Bodies on Climate Duties is due to be published at the end of 2025 and Scotland's Climate Change Plan is due to be published by March 2026.

- Forthcoming duties under the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) are likely to be more data-driven, with regular monitoring and reporting. It is likely resource needs to be dedicated to this to ensure compliance with duties and minimise risks.

Additional resource may be required to ensure that we can also expand the reach of the Council's activities to the wider citizenship and communities in the city, to ensure our continued success in making Aberdeen a thriving place to live and work, both for people and nature.

- 3.8 Whilst the CCNS and the statutory CCR highlight a range of proactive measures and work towards our climate targets and becoming more nature positive in the delivery of our services and duties, there is still challenges to sustain momentum. The challenge of the Council achieving net zero and making substantial progress to restore nature by 2045 is significant and will require sustained focus. Developing infrastructure takes time and as early quick wins are exhausted, future reductions in emissions and restoring nature will become increasingly challenging. Reflecting this, governance has been strengthened with the establishment of an Energy Board to help drive forward measures in relation to energy, climate and nature. The scheduled revisions for City and Council plans for climate and nature in 2026, as well as carbon budget setting, are an opportunity to build on actions in place, encompass new drivers and address evolving statutory requirements.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Failing to submit the Statutory Climate Change Report would put the Council in breach of a legal duty under part four of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

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	Climate and Nature risks and opportunities not being recorded and regularly monitored	<p>Climate & nature risks reported through risk registers. Includes risk on compliance with climate & biodiversity duties. Project Register and dashboard in place. Introduction of a data platform to support climate planning taking place.</p> <p>Data on climate & nature collected and reported through Council Climate and Nature Summary (CCNS) and other related reports</p>	L	Yes
Compliance	Non-compliance of the Public Bodies Duties under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011	CCNS, statutory Climate Change Report (CCR) & Biodiversity Duty Reports (BDR) are completed, published, and submitted within the mandatory timeframe.	L	Yes

Operational	Risk that reporting does not meet the required format. Risk that systems to collate data are inefficient. Risk that incorrect emission factors are used	Reporting guidance is followed. Information and data is entered on the standard reporting templates. Set scope of data is collated annually for consistency. Up to date emission factors used. Improvements to data collation, introduction of a data platform taking place	L	Yes
Financial	No direct financial risk.	CCNS is achieved through existing budgets.	L	Yes
Reputational	Council failure to meet statutory climate and nature requirements	Annual publication of the CCNS and CCR Internal governance established for the Council Climate Change Plan. Refresh cycle established for the plan. Internal process for data gathering to evidence meeting our statutory climate and nature duties	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	Failure to meet 2045 climate and nature duties	Plan refresh cycles. Continue monitoring, reporting progress on climate and nature duties.	M	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The report contributes to providing CO2 emission statements, supports the reduction of the carbon footprint of the council's building estate and vehicle fleet and provides updates in relation to various items

<u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	including green and opens spaces and tree planting which contribute to deliver a city that is fit for future generations.
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of two LOIP Stretch Outcomes:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>14. Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking; 5% of people cycling and wheeling as main mode of travel and a 5% reduction in car miles by 2026.</p> <p>15. Addressing the nature crisis by protecting/ managing 26% of Aberdeen's area for nature by 2026.</p>
Regional and City Strategies	The Council Climate and Nature Summary highlights the climate and nature targets and objectives in a range of regional and city-wide strategies including; Regional and Local Transport Strategies, Strategic and Local Development Plan, Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Aberdeen Adapts, Local Housing Strategy and Net Zero Routemap for the City.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

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

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 CR&E/ 24/282 - Climate Change Report 2023-24
(https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s163128/Final_ClimateChangeReport.pdf)
- 10.2 Council Climate Change Plan 2021-2025
(https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-10/_Council%20Climate%20Change%20Plan%202021-2025.pdf)

[25%20Towards%20a%20Net%20Zero%20and%20Climate%20Resilient%20Council.pdf.pdf\)](#)

- 10.3 COM/24/059 - Council Carbon Budget 2024/25
(<https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s154003/CarbonBudget2024-25Council6March2024.pdf>)
- 10.4 CR&E/25/037- Council Carbon Budget 2025/26
(<https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s166615/CarbonBudget2526.pdf>)
- 10.5 CR&E/25/205 - Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts: Annual Report 2024/25
(<https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s172446/NZAAAAnnualUpdateNZET2025SeptemberFinal.pdf>)
- 10.6 The last Biodiversity Duty Report was submitted in December 2023 and can be viewed on our website
(<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/ACCBiodiversityDutyReport2020FINALGraphicVersionv2%20%281%29%20%281%29.pdf>)

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 - Council Climate and Nature Summary 2024/25
- 11.2 Appendix 2 - Statutory Climate Change Report 2024/25

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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