

## **4.0 The Highland Council's Plans**

The Highland Council has produced a programme of action, which sets out its priorities during 2009-12, for making the Highlands one of Europe's leading regions.

### **4.1 Strengthening the Highlands**

The Highland Council's [Strengthening the Highlands](#) Programme aims to make the Highlands one of Europe's leading regions, by creating sustainable communities, with more balanced population growth and economic development across the Highlands and to build a fairer and healthier Highlands. The Programme contains commitments across five main themes –

- What we will do for children and families
- What we will do for communities and older people
- What we will do for the economy
- What we will do for our environment
- What we will do to make highland council more effective and efficient

### **4.2 Corporate Plan**

The [Corporate Plan](#) for The Highland Council sets out the full agenda of the Strengthening the Highlands Programme; the ambitions for the Highlands, how they will be achieved and how progress towards them will be measured.

The Corporate Plan, approved by the Council in December 2008, will be delivered by working with other public bodies, local communities, voluntary organisations and the business sector. In coalition the Council's Administration will work with all elected members in the Council and ensure that the interests of the Highlands are represented well with Government and Parliaments at the Scottish, UK and European levels.

### **4.3 Service Plan**

The [Service Plans](#) are strategic documents which outline how each of the seven services within The Highland Council will contribute to the delivery of the commitments of Council's "Strengthening the Highlands" programme. These detail the measures which each of the following services will undertake to meet the ambitions set out within the Corporate Plan –

- Chief Executive
- Education, Culture & Sport
- Finance
- Housing & Property
- Planning & Development
- Social Work
- Transport, Environmental and Community

### **4.4 Energy Management Performance Plan**

The Highland Council implemented a five-year Energy Management Performance Plan in 2005 (now under the new remit of the [Carbon Management Plan](#)) to "green" the use of energy in buildings, setting targets for energy, carbon and cost reductions by 2010 and undertaking an ambitious programme of energy saving measures in the top energy-consuming buildings in its building stock.

The Energy Management Performance plan focused on the energy management of properties alone.

### **4.5 Carbon Management Plan**

In 2006, The Highland Council was one of the first Local Authorities in Scotland to produce a [Carbon Management Plan](#) (CMP) with assistance from the [Carbon Trust](#). The CMP came into effect in 2009 and sets out a clear strategy and action plan for Highland Council to further reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 12% by April 2012 over a 2007/2008 baseline. The plan includes a comprehensive set of energy and carbon reduction programmes throughout the Council.

The primary focus of the CMP is to reduce carbon emissions from not only Council properties (as in the Energy Management Performance Plan) but also the vehicle fleet, business travel, street lighting, internal waste and water.

The Plan ensures that The Highland Council will have achieved the following targets set out in the [Housing & Property Service Plan](#) –

- Ensure that all building projects, for both new and refurbished properties, comply with best practice in sustainability such that the Highland Council is seen as an exemplar organisation in the field of sustainability design and facilities management.
- Increase the use of renewable micro generation technology sources to provide energy in the Council estate, with appropriate integration of Wind Turbines, Biomass fuel boilers, combined heat and power (CHP) and solar energy, increasing the overall output from 1800kW in 2008 to a minimum 8000kW by 2012. This is to be combined with a drive to reduce energy consumption through Energy Efficiency measures and behavioural change.
- Improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock and reduce fuel poverty by continuing to implement HRA Capital Programme investment, reviewing capital programme activity for 2012 to 2015 to target energy efficiency work which will contribute to meeting the SHQS, installing low carbon technologies in HRA capital programme, aiming for all Council housing to be rated at NHER 5 or above and reducing carbon emissions by 10% from Council houses.
- We aim to reduce water consumption in all Council building by continuing to monitor the water consumption in Council buildings (non-housing) with a target to reduce consumption by 10% while reporting and monitoring quarterly to the Climate Change Working Group.

In addition, the Carbon Management Plan also ensures that the following targets set out in the [Corporate Plan](#)'s Theme 4: "What will we do for our Environment" are also achieved –

- Produce and implement a climate change strategy for the Highlands which will reduce our impact on the environment and adapt our services to cope with the impact of climate change.
- As well as improving the energy efficiency of our Council housing stock, reduce the Council's energy use and carbon emissions from our buildings by 15% by 2010-11, from a baseline of 2005, by reducing or avoiding energy costs.
- Increase the use of renewable microgeneration technology sources to provide energy in the Council estate, with appropriate integration of wind turbines, biomass fuel boilers, combined heat and power and solar energy, increasing the overall rating from 1,800 kW in 2008 to a minimum of 4,000 kW in 2010.
- Prepare a green travel plan for the Council by 2008, and work with the Scottish Government to encourage and promote green travel plans for our public sector partners, and all businesses and developments across the Highlands.
- Reduce paper use in our offices and recycle 50% by the end of 2009.

In order to achieve this, the Carbon Management Plan has been broken down into five strategic themes –

- Theme 1: Reduce Carbon Emissions from Internal Operations
- Theme 2: Reduce Energy Costs
- Theme 3: Exploring New Areas for Action
- Theme 4: Promote Awareness and Behavioural Change
- Theme 5: Lead by Example

Furthermore, the council has developed a hierarchy of fuel options for use in council properties; the aim of this is to clearly show which fuels are acceptable, narrowing the options to those that the council believes will allow them to achieve the targets set out above. The hierarchy is as follows:

- Where mains gas is available this will be used as the heating option.
- Where mains gas is not available the following fuels will be considered in this order – Renewables, Electric Fan Assisted Storage Heaters then Heating Oil.

Where mains gas is not available and an alternative fuel option is to be considered then a Fuel Options and Running Costs Appraisal must be carried out (as detailed in section 6); this will determine which alternative fuel will be best suited to the project, minimising energy use and carbon generation.

#### 4.6 Green Council

The Highland Council was one of the first of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities to sign [Scotland's Climate Change Declaration](#) in 2007 and then reaffirmed its commitment to delivering greener and more efficient services in the Highlands by re-signing the Declaration in May 2008.

The council has set up a member led 'Climate Change Working Group' also known as the '[Green Council](#)'. The aim of the group is to deliver the relevant commitments contained in Climate Change Declaration along with the aims and commitments set out in the Strengthening the Highlands programme, the Corporate Plan, the Service Plans and the Carbon Management Plan, by overseeing the production and implementation of a climate change strategy for the Highland Region which will reduce the council's impact on the environment and adapt the council's services to cope with the effects of climate change.

One of the council's main commitments through Scotland's Climate Change Declaration is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; this has led to The Highland Council becoming "Carbon Smart" and influenced the creation of the Carbon Management Plan.