

Agenda Item	6
Report No	CCP/3/19

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Climate Change Panel

Date: 17th October 2019

Report Title: Update on Scottish Government's Programme for Government – Response to the Climate Emergency

Report By: Director of Development & Infrastructure

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report presents an update on the Scottish Government's response to the climate emergency in the new programme for government.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

Note the contents of the report.

3. Background

3.1 At the beginning of September, the Scottish Government published their new programme for government. The programme, titled *Protecting Scotland's Future*, sets out the actions the Scottish Government will take over the course of the coming year, and this year's programme has been heavily influenced by the Scottish Government's declaration of a climate emergency in May 2019.

3.2 This paper presents a summary of the key climate change issues arising from the new programme, whilst highlighting how this may impact The Highland Council.

4. Summary of Programme for Government – Response to Climate Emergency

4.1 The following provides a brief summary of the key points from the programme for government, relevant to the Council's own declaration of a climate and ecological emergency:

4.2 Ending Scotland's Contribution to Climate Change

The programme highlights that we need to work across the public, private and third sectors and across Scotland's diverse communities to meaningfully address the climate emergency. The

recently established Climate Emergency Response Group already shows the sort of collaboration that we will need to see to be successful. The Scottish Government have noted their 12 specific asks and the Programme responds to them, as well as making other major commitments to set out some of the first actions to be taken to respond to the climate emergency.

4.3 Scotland's 'Green New Deal'

Scotland's 'Green New Deal' aims to kick-start investment and build the momentum needed for it to continue longer term, making a significant impact on emissions across different sectors and guaranteeing new, high quality jobs.

The Scottish National Investment Bank will begin investing in 2020, supported by the £150 million Building Scotland Fund and a further £340 million in investment to 2021. Securing the transition to net zero will be the Bank's primary mission. The Bank will be supported by £130 million in the coming year.

A Green Growth Accelerator will unlock additional investment for emissions-reducing infrastructure that supports our transition.

The Scottish Government recognises that the green finance market is growing, and they want Scotland to be ready to attract those investors. They will bring to market a £3 billion portfolio of projects over the next three years. These projects which will all be ready for investment will include renewables, waste and construction and will look at expanding into other sectors such as transport.

The programme commits to acting to give Scotland's workforce the skills that it needs. The Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan will set out how they will maximise opportunities for people to gain these skills and how we will work with colleges, universities, business and industry to equip the population with the skills of the future.

4.4 A 'Mission Zero' for Transport

Transport is Scotland's largest greenhouse gas emitting sector and the Programme contains actions across all modes of transport. The Scottish Government have committed to publishing a new National Transport Strategy later this year which will redefine investment priorities to put sustainable transport at the heart of decision-making and ensure that transport plays a key role in delivering net zero emissions by 2045.

A commitment has been made to bring forward a step change in investment to make bus services greener and more punctual and reliable, so that more people make the choice to take the bus. Actions include:

- investing over £500 million in improved bus priority infrastructure to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services and raise bus usage
- beginning plans to reallocate road space on parts of the motorway network around Glasgow to high-occupancy vehicles such as buses
- working with the Scottish National Investment Bank, the bus sector and potential investors to explore the potential for new forms of patient and innovative financing to radically accelerate the deployment of zero emission buses across Scotland
- commitment to phasing out new petrol and diesel cars by 2032. 1,500 new electric charge points have been delivered and support has been provided for business and communities to buy ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs). Additional progress will be made by:

- providing an additional £17 million to support the demand for ULEVs through the Low Carbon Transport Loan scheme, while expanding the scheme to include used electric vehicles
- creating the conditions to phase out the need for all new petrol and diesel vehicles in Scotland's public sector fleet by 2030, and phasing out the need for all petrol and diesel cars from the public sector fleet by 2025
- forming a new Strategic Partnership with electricity network companies to improve electric vehicle charging infrastructure and electricity networks across Scotland

The Scottish Government will also put in place plans to decarbonise railways by 2035 by setting out detailed timescales and actions in Spring 2020 that will include investment in electric trains.

There is an aim to decarbonise scheduled flights within Scotland by 2040 and to create the world's first zero emission aviation region in partnership with Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL). This will include taking action to decarbonise airport operations in the HIAL region. Trials of low or zero emission planes in 2021.

4.5 Driving Down Emissions from Buildings and Heating

The Scottish Government aim to ensure that new homes and buildings across Scotland are built to meet the challenge of the climate emergency, combining the action we need to take on climate change with our ambition to provide affordable, warm homes.

This year's consultation on new building regulations will include measures to improve energy efficiency and the quality of construction and we will work with stakeholders to develop regulations to ensure that new homes from 2024 must use renewable or low carbon heat. Similarly, the ambition is to phase in renewable and low carbon heating systems for new non-domestic buildings consented from 2024.

The Scottish Government will show leadership in the public sector, engaging with partners on a new Net Zero Carbon Standard for new public buildings and accelerating efforts to use 100% renewable electricity on the Scottish public estate. In addition, Scottish Water will become a zero-carbon user of electricity by 2040 – five years before our net zero target.

This year, the most ambitious fuel poverty legislation in the UK was passed in Scotland, setting a target date of 2040 to tackle the root causes of fuel poverty. The Scottish Government have committed to publishing a Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2020, setting out how they will tackle all the drivers of fuel poverty in ways which work for different communities. This includes addressing the issues of low household incomes, unaffordable fuel prices, low levels of energy efficiency and inefficient use of fuel.

Biodiversity loss and the climate crisis are intimately bound together: nature plays a key role in defining and regulating our climate and climate is key in shaping the state of nature. The Biodiversity Challenge Fund was almost entirely committed in its first year and so an additional £2 million will be made available to fund further important projects addressing biodiversity loss and climate change.

These new commitments signal important shifts in public sector investment and make clear the Scottish Government's position on leveraging private investment. They will put Scotland at the forefront of innovation in new low emissions technologies and products, stimulating inward investment and supporting new and existing high quality jobs and sustainable supply chains. They

will make a significant impact on reducing emissions across Scotland, ensuring we play our part in protecting the environment and the wellbeing of generations to come.

5. Potential Impacts for The Highland Council

- 5.1 *Protecting Scotland's Future* sets out an ambitious programme for Government in respect of the climate emergency, and it is clear that much of this will impact the work of the Council, whilst also creating opportunities. In many respects, much of what is set out within the programme for government is already underway at the Council; we are working towards the region ending its contribution to climate change by 2025; we are supporting the shift to low carbon transport by delivering significant levels of additional EV charging infrastructure whilst moving many more of our own fleet vehicles to low carbon alternatives (although it is accepted that this will have to be significantly ramped up to meet the 2025 target); and we have an ongoing programme of work to drive down emissions from our buildings through the £3.5m interest free loan from SALIX (LED lighting and oil-fired boiler upgrades) as well as £2.5m for solar PV installations across our estate.
- 5.2 It is anticipated that more details will be released in the coming weeks and months around many of the commitments made in the programme for government, and it will be important for the Council to be ready to maximise any opportunities to secure funding for low carbon projects through the Scottish National Investment Bank and Green Growth Accelerator. A further paper will be presented to the Climate Change Panel once more detail is available around how the funding opportunities are going to be structured and the types of projects these funding streams could establish.

6. Implications

- 6.1 Resource - There are no resource implications arising from this report. However, it is inevitable given the various commitments made around the climate emergency that additional work will arise for the Council over the coming months, and it is unclear whether there is sufficient resource to deliver this.
- 6.2 Legal - The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a legal duty on the Council to contribute to the delivery of emissions reduction targets.
- 6.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – There are no community implications arising from this report.
- 6.4 Climate Change/Carbon CLEVER – There are potentially a number of climate change implications arising out of the programme for government. These will become clearer as workstreams are developed and additional guidance is provided by the Scottish Government.
- 6.5 Risk – Given increasing public awareness of the issues around the climate and ecological emergency, there is a reputational risk to the Council from not taking sufficient action to reduce our impact in line with Scottish Government ambition.
- 6.6 Gaelic – There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

Designation: Director of Development & Infrastructure

Date: 4th October 2019

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