

Agenda Item	5.
Report No	CCC/20/24

The Highland Council

Committee: Climate Change

Date: 7 November 2024

Report Title: Net Zero Thematic Group Update – Built Estate & Energy

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 The report provides an update on the work being progressed through the Built Estate and Energy Thematic Group.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to **consider and comment** on the progress of actions by the Built Estate & Energy thematic Group.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** - the function of the Net Zero Thematic group requires significant staff time across services and HLH.

3.2 **Legal** - the Council has several requirements in respect of reporting against its climate change obligations, in addition to being required to directly support Scotland's target to end its contribution to climate change no later than 2045.

3.3 **Risk** - failure to proactively address the climate and ecological emergency across all service delivery areas carries significant reputational risk, particularly considering the political ambition at both local and national levels around the climate change agenda. In addition, failure to take a proactive approach to climate change action will limit opportunities to secure external funding.

As outlined in Audit Scotland's briefing 'Scotland's councils' approach to addressing climate change,' action is needed now to make sure that Scotland is resilient enough to deal with the impacts of the changes to the climate that are already happening. If we do not respond quickly enough to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase our resilience, severe widespread impacts are expected. This includes extreme disruption to the systems we depend on for food, water, and shelter.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - there are no implications arising from this report.

3.5 **Gaelic** - there are no implications arising from this report.

4 Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Net Zero Thematic Group update – Built Estate & Energy

5.1 The Thematic Group continues to meet intermittently in order to review and progress the actions contained within the Action Plan.

5.2 Some of the actions from the Action Plan are being monitored and reported through the Net Zero, Energy Investment and Innovation Portfolio Board.

5.3 The undernoted provides a brief update on progress with each of the key actions:-

- Heating Policy – the policy was approved at the Housing & Property Committee in May 2024. The policy was uploaded to the Council's website and a corporate comms issued thereafter to raise awareness. Surveys have been undertaken to determine operational hours of various premises so that heating use can be controlled more effectively.
- Energy & Carbon Performance Assessment – the benchmarking tool is now live, and a link is available on the Council's website. Various demonstrations and presentations have been given to raise awareness. It is in the process of being refreshed with updated data and this refresh will be published in November 2024. The benchmarking tool continues to be accessed for a variety of uses.
- Net Zero Design Standards – work is progressing to update technical briefing documents. Internal workshops have been held within the Property Team to raise awareness and responses are being prepared to the Scottish Government's consultation on 'Building Regulations: Determining the principles for a Scottish equivalent to the Passivhaus standard'
- Net Zero energy surveys – an initial list of priority properties has been agreed and survey work is underway on these. Progress on this action will be reported under the Operational Delivery Plan reporting within PRMS.
- Conversion of fossil-fuel heating systems – a number of options appraisals are being progressed and expected to be completed by December 2024.
- Renewable energy generation projects – Progress on this action will be reported under the Operational Delivery Plan reporting within PRMS.

- Asset Management use of the assessment tool - the link has been shared with the Corporate Property Asset Management Team to use as an information and comparison tool to inform property reviews. When data from the programme of surveys is available it will be used to identify priority properties to target for review and rationalisation.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Place

Date: 7 October 2024

Author: Sharon Barrie, Service Lead – Design & Construction

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Built Estate & Energy Thematic Group Action Plan

Thematic Group Name **Built Estate & Energy**
 Thematic Group Lead **Finlay MacDonald**

Description of Action	Delivery Lead	Timeline	Planned Outcome(s)	Outcome Measure(s)	Key Performance Indicators	Resource Assessment		Costs	Financial Assessment	Comms requirements
						Are additional resources required to deliver? (E.g. staffing, software, etc. Are the resources skills and tools already available?) Please detail associated costs.	Are additional financial resources required to deliver?			
						Initiation	Ongoing			
1.0 Implementation of Corporate Heating Policy (non-domestic estate)	Built Estate & Energy Thematic Group	Implemented within 2 years	Heating policy in use	Heating policy guidelines and settings applied consistently		Consultation with Services and Unions	Property & Energy Teams maintain oversight against compliance.	Achievable within existing resources, or realistic prospect of additional resources	Expected to reduce consumption and associated costs.	Policy, user guidance and implementation date to be shared with all relevant stakeholders prior to launch date. General news through staff connections that policy is online. Message from Senior Leaders on importance of heating policy and link to achieving net zero issued on staff connections.
1.1	Property	Implemented within 2 years	Prepare guidance on controls and make available to building users	Heating policy guidelines and settings applied consistently				Achievable within existing resources, or realistic prospect of additional resources		Simplified guidance, news of policy and changes issued to all staff through staff connections and Viva engage. Supporting advice/guidance from OHSW on behaviours, personal responsibility issued through Viva engage. Home and work energy saving tips issued through Viva engage.
2.0 Energy and Carbon performance assessment (non-domestic estate)	CCET	Implemented within 2 years	Performance benchmarking tool	Tool up to date, available and accessible publicly		Energy Team lead with input from all services. Identify all heating systems that require converted to non-fossil fuel.	To be updated annually with potential for expanded scope and information provision	Achievable within existing resources, or realistic prospect of additional resources	N/A	Promote benchmarking tool on staff connections and Viva engage with a link. Add a link to the benchmarking tool on relevant property intranet and external web pages including Asset Management pages.
2.1	Built Estate & Energy Thematic Group	Ongoing	Performance benchmarking tool	Review data		Series of meetings with FM, Property, Asset Management and Surveyor teams.		Achievable within existing resources, or realistic prospect of additional resources		Relevant email contact details on all pages with link to Benchmarking tool should staff/public want to query data
3.0 Net Zero Design Standard established	Property	Implemented within 2 years	Determine net zero carbon standards for all new buildings	Net zero carbon standards determined for all new buildings		Consider the actions required to design to net zero standards (Property service working group)		Achievable within existing resources, or realistic prospect of additional resources	Short term uplift compared to current standards, however external funding provision unlikely without compliance	Once agreed net zero standards to be communicated to all relevant stakeholders. Message from Senior Leaders on importance of net zero standards on staff connections to all staff. External new piece through corporate comms on Council adoption of new net zero standards as a key step to achieving net zero.
	Property	Implemented within 2 years	Achieve zero carbon standards in all refurbished buildings, with respect to systems and areas refurbished.			Consider the actions required to design to net zero standards (Property service working group)		Achievable within existing resources, or realistic prospect of additional resources	Short term uplift compared to current standards, however external funding provision unlikely without compliance	
4.0 Programme of energy awareness and training	Built Estate & Energy Thematic Group	Ongoing	Improved energy awareness and efficiency in non-domestic estate	Reduce utility consumption by 10% by raising awareness of ways to reduce energy	Metric to be developed based on participant feedback. Council and building assessment of energy consumption and carbon emissions.	ECO officer network to be re-established and supported. Delivery of staff training and awareness sessions. Training to be rolled out to Members and Senior Management.	Provision of associated information and materials on website and directly to staff.	Achievable within existing resources, or realistic prospect of additional resources		Message from Senior Leaders on importance of energy awareness and link to achieving net zero and financial savings issued on staff connections. Energy efficiency tips and general messages on behaviours issued to staff through Viva engage. Item to be added to standard ERD process to ensure staff are reminded of the importance of energy awareness annually
4.1 Inclusion of energy awareness within hybrid working policy and guidance	CPAM	Ongoing	Hybrid Working Policy, flexible office guidance and Asset Management staff comms to include energy awareness information, guidance on Council expectations around behaviour and best practice and links to Heating Policy	Contribute to reduced energy consumption by raising awareness of ways to reduce energy in the workplace and when working from home. <i>(Are emissions associated with agile and home working to be reflected within general reporting? Mechanism for assessment may need to be developed?)</i>	Council and building assessment of energy consumption and carbon emissions	NWOW project not currently resourced – HR working to appoint a policy officer to develop hybrid working policies		Achievable within existing resources, or realistic prospect of additional resources	No additional costs forecast - Policy Officer to be appointed using existing funding from NWOW	Hybrid working policy to be communicated to all stakeholders when finalised, through staff connections, viva engage, manager 121s and ERD
5.0 Net Zero & Energy surveys	CCET	Implemented within 2 years	Knowledge and awareness of actions required to be undertaken to transition to Net Zero	Site specific reports detailing measures required to transition to Net Zero carbon emissions. Database of associated projects, detailing cost/benefit analysis.	No of properties surveyed and reports prepared.	Energy Team re-purposed to focus on undertaking. Additional temporary staff recruited to support.	After initial phase, to be delivered as part of Energy Team BAU.	Additional resourcing required, potentially self funded subject to approval		
6.0 Convert all fossil-fuel heating systems to low or zero carbon alternatives	Property	Over 5 years	Convert all fossil-fuel heating systems to net zero carbon alternatives					Additional external resourcing and/or facilitation required	Non-Domestic £12.5M (based on 50 properties with an average cost of £250k) Social Housing £22.5M (based on 5,500 properties with an average cost of £4k) There are currently 162 non-domestic properties with oil or gas heating plant. Most of these would need complete heating system replacements (pipes, pumps, emitters) if heat pumps were to be installed - average costs are likely to be considerably higher than the £250k quoted above.	

