The Highland Council

Agenda Item	**4i**
Report No	**CCC/9/25**

Committee: Climate Change

Date: 21 May 2025

Report Title: Net Zero Programme Update

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Net Zero Programme and to present the fourth tranche of projects for inclusion in the Programme.

1.2 The content and structure of the report is intended to:-

- assist Member scrutiny and performance management;
- inform decision making and aid continuous improvement; and
- provide transparency and accessibility

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

i. **Scrutinise** and **note** progress to date as outlined in the report and Appendix 1 of the report; and
ii. **Agree to recommend to the Council** the approval of the project brief templates in Appendix 2 of the report for inclusion in the Council's Net Zero Programme.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource –** A revised approach for the future delivery of the Net Zero Strategy was approved by the Climate Change Committee in May 2024. The Climate Change and Energy Team (CCET) continues to work closely with services to develop and deliver projects that will accelerate the Council's transition to Net Zero and becoming a climate-ready organisation. Resource implications (staff and funding) will be considered on a project-specific basis.

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.

Key risks at a Programme level are outlined in section 5.4. As projects within the programme develop, project specific risks and issues will be captured and managed according to project management best practice and in compliance with the Risk Management Policy.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - There are no implications arising from this report. However, health and safety will be addressed in the Council's Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan which is being developed as part of the Net Zero Programme.

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 a monitoring and update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Net Zero Programme

5.1 <u>Requests for change</u>

A review of milestones and measures of success for the Net Zero Programme was undertaken during quarter four of 2024/25 as part of PMO (Programme Management Office) assurance activity. This resulted in a number of Requests for Change being presented to the Net Zero, Energy Investment and Innovation Portfolio Board in March. The Portfolio Board approved the following change requests on 25 March 2025:-

- The milestone relating to **Develop proposed projects for inclusion in the Net Zero Programme** was re-opened and the completion date amended from November 2024 to March 2027 to cover the delivery plan timeline.

- The introduction of two new milestones:-
  - **Approval of an Adaptation Strategy for the Highland Council**
  - **Agreement and introduction of core KPIs to be reported at both a Corporate and Service level** - this milestone supersedes the following previous milestones: KPIs linked to Service Plan; and Policies/practice reviewed for carbon impact.

On 16 April 2025 the Portfolio Board approved amendments to the end dates for the following milestones:-

- **Shared Procurement Service to evaluate and propose alternative carbon budgeting tools** (amended from February 2025 to May 2025);
- **Service carbon budgets/emissions targets approved** (amended from April 2025 to August 2025); and
- **Net Zero embedded in Capital Programme** (amended from September 2024 to September 2025)

5.2   Overall RAG Status

Following approval of the change requests outlined above, the Programme has been ragged as **Green** as all milestones are on target.

5.3   Key Milestones

Progress regarding milestones is outlined in the table below:-

Timeline	Milestone	Current status	Comments
Completes March 2027	Develop proposed projects for inclusion in Net Zero Programme	On Target	23 projects have been approved to date. The Climate Change and Energy Team continues to work closely with services across the Council to develop projects that will be brought to the May Committee and future meetings of the Climate Change Committee.
Completes May 2025	Shared Procurement Service to evaluate and propose alternative carbon budgeting tools	On Target	The Procurement and Community Wealth thematic group provided an update regarding progress at the Net Zero, Energy Investment & Innovation Board on 25 March 2025.

			The Shared Procurement Service has progressed the development of supplier spend data to be converted into a scope three carbon emission value report produced using a carbon value tool. The performance of this will now take place following the Council entering into an NDA agreement on the control of this data. The Council has provided Oxygen with the required data and a first draft report is due in April. This will provide the functionality to see data at a budget holder level with a carbon ability to then be developed by Service / Supplier / Subjective code.
Completes August 2025	Service carbon budgets/emissions targets approved	On Target	The above milestone is an essential component in the development and introduction of service carbon budgets and emissions targets.
Completes September 2025	Net Zero embedded in Capital Programme	On Target	As previously highlighted, to date, there have been significant delays progressing this milestone. As agreed at the Capital Board on 24 March 2025; the Climate Change and Energy Team will now lead on developing a process that measures and monitors embodied and operational carbon in all projects with a view to achieving reductions in line with the Council's Net Zero Strategy. A high-level approach will be presented to the Capital Board on 28 April 2025; following which, the approach will be developed further in collaboration with colleagues cross-service.

			An additional interim milestone has been set to bring the final version of the Climate Change Impact Assessment and guidance to the Capital Board on 28 April 2025.
Completes June 2025	Agreement and introduction of core KPIs to be reported at both a Corporate and Service Level	On Target	This milestone is intended to focus on embedding Net Zero across the organisation with proposed KPIs such as the number of Net Zero Ambassadors per service; number of staff that have completed climate literacy training; number of policies that have been reviewed and updated to align with the Net Zero Strategy etc. Draft KPIs will be tabled for discussion at a future Net Zero Strategy Group meeting for feedback/input from the group.
Completes August 2025	Approval of an Adaptation Strategy for the Council	On Target	To date, the Climate Change and Energy Team has undertaken desk research to progress the development of the Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan. Cross-service collaboration is now required. The Portfolio Board agreed on 25 March 2025 to support cross-service collaboration to develop the Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan. The Portfolio Board also agreed to prioritise mandatory climate training for the Council's Risk and Resilience Group to ensure members of the group are fully informed to make decisions based on climate impacts, mitigation and adaptation.

5.4   <u>Key Risks</u>

The key risks for the programme currently being managed and monitored via PRMS are as follows:-

KEY RISKS ASSESSED / RESPONSE	CURRENT RISK RATING	RESPONSE
Net Zero: Failure to align our budget expenditure	16	Treat
Net Zero: Emissions Targets Not Met	9	Tolerate
Net Zero: Service Engagement with Net Zero Agenda	9	Tolerate

Further information regarding key risks for the programme are detailed within the Delivery Plan Reporting – Progress Update Q4 2024/25 on this agenda.

6   Net Zero Programme – quarterly projects update

6.1   **Appendix 1** outlines progress for the 23 projects approved to date.

7   Net Zero Thematic Group Updates

7.1   Capital Programme and Net Zero Funding Strategy

A revised approach for reporting was agreed by the Climate Change Committee in May 2024. This includes each thematic group reporting to the Committee on at least an annual basis, providing an update on progress/achievements, challenges, and proposed actions. An update from the Capital Programme and Net Zero Funding Strategy thematic group is presented at Item 4ii on this Agenda. This concludes the first cycle of annual updates from the seven thematic groups.

7.2   Sustainable Business Travel

The third tranche of projects, recommended for approval by the Climate Change Committee in January 2025, included projects relating to elected member travel and a review of staff business travel. It was agreed that high-level reports regarding these workstreams would be brought back to the Climate Change Committee in May and these are presented within the Net Zero Thematic Group Update – Sustainable Business Travel report on this agenda - Item 4iii.

8   Net Zero Programme – fourth tranche of projects

8.4   Four project templates within **Appendix 2** have been developed for consideration by the Committee detailing the planned activity, milestones and measures of success for each project.

Designation:	Assistant Chief Executive - Place
Date:	17 April 2025
Authors:	Fiona Daschofsky, Programme Manager (Climate Change & Energy Team)
Background Papers:	None
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Net Zero Programme – Project Updates Appendix 2 – Project Brief Templates

Built Estate & Energy						
Project	Activity	Project Elements	Measures of Success	Milestones	Update - January 2025	Update - May 2025
Net Zero Transition Surveys	Undertake surveys of 300 non-domestic Council properties to evaluate and identify measures required to transition to Net Zero carbon emissions	• Carry out physical surveys and associated analysis to prepare site-specific reports detailing measures required to transition to Net Zero. • Compile database of costed opportunities • Identify, and where deemed cost-effective, to progress implementation of cost reduction opportunities and projects	• Year 1 – 35% of properties surveyed • Year 2 – 65% of properties surveyed • Year 1 – £0.20m of opportunities implemented • Year 2 – £0.45m of opportunities implemented • Year 3 – £0.45m of opportunities implemented	M1 - Plan agreed - Apr 24 - Aug 24 M2 - 1st Tranche properties surveyed - Apr 24 - Mar 25 M3 - 2nd Tranche properties surveyed - Apr 25 - Mar 26	Staff recruitment ongoing for a number of months and not yet fully achieved - lack of suitable applicants. Feedback received from other services with respect to prioritisation of sites/projects. Programme progressing reasonably well, although staff resource issues continue to hamper efforts across the team Desktop reviews completed 31 Site visits completed 34 Energy Conservation Measures (ECM) analysis completed 9 Net Zero Audit (NZA) Report in review 4 NZA report completed 4	Staff recruitment complete, programme progressing well. Presentations ongoing with occupying services, including progression of behaviour-related measures. Desktop reviews completed 68 Site visits completed 98 ECM analysis completed 21 NZA Report in review 12 NZA report completed 22
Solar PV Council Estate	Optimisation and expansion of solar PV across the Council's non-domestic, non-commercial estate to supply green energy by direct wire; delivering a financial and carbon saving and protecting against future carbon tax liability.	• Identify and rank council-owned/occupied sites • Undertake any remedial works required • Design and install • Maintenance regimes, compliance and certification built into management of the sites	• 100% existing sites operational and generating energy • Income: £1.3m by year 3 rising to £2m p/a • Increase in installed generation capacity • Reduced electricity costs for service users • Reduction in Council CO2 emissions	M1 - 04/24: >50% of total generation re-activated M2 - 04/24: Financial model signed off M3 - 05/24: 2024/26 Project and Programme in place M4 - 03/25: 60% of 1MW of new installation completed M5 - 09/25: 1MW of additional new installation completed M6 - 03/26: 1MW additional generation p/a up to 5 years	Contractor programme to assess all existing solar PV assets underway with completion scheduled for February 2025. Renewables engineer resource not currently available which is a risk in the ongoing delivery of the programme, with regard to new installations. Other staff providing partial cover, but not optimum. Feedback received from other services with respect to site/project prioritisation. Thirteen evaluations undertaken to date, with the following assessment No potential No off = 1 yes, with major additional facilitation works 4 yes, with minor additional facilitation works 2 yes, appears suitable as is (subject to structural assessment) 6 Following 6 sites identified for priority progression. Detailed design to be co-ordinated in-house to be taken to next stage of business case submission. - Grant House Resource Centre - Highland Folk Museum - Deshar PS - Waste Transfer Station – Longman - Waste Transfer Station – Portree - Waste Transfer Station – Fort William	Significant strides have been made in 2024/25 to re-energise our energy assets across the estate, delivering financial savings, reducing emissions, and laying the foundation for further investment in renewable energy. Key Achievements in 2024/25 - Energy Generated: Over 1.29 million kWh of electricity was generated across operational solar PV systems. - Cost Savings: This generation has resulted in estimated savings of over £400,000. - Recommissioning Programme: The first re-energised system came back online in August 2024. - New Installations: An additional 256 kW of solar PV capacity was installed. - Operational Capacity: As of March 2025, 88% of the Council's total installed generation capacity is operational. Following 6 sites identified for priority progression. Detailed design to be co-ordinated in-house to be taken to next stage of business case submission. - Grant House Resource Centre - Highland Folk Museum - Deshar PS - Waste Transfer Station – Longman - Rugby Club - Aquadome
Conversion of Fossil Fuel Systems	Undertake detailed heating system options appraisals for properties with aged and poor condition fossil-fuel based heating systems.	• Carry out options appraisals to determine how the heating systems can be converted to non-fossil fuel alternatives that support the transition to Net Zero carbon emissions	• Undertake 6 options appraisals on heating systems which have less than 5 years life expectancy • Define and consult upon report format and content to ensure fitness for purpose • Complete by end of December 2025	M1 - 08/24 - Agree selected properties M2 - 12/24 - Complete options appraisals and associated reports for internal issue for review M3 - 02/25 – Incorporation into planned maintenance works for approved projects	As of December 2024, seven heating options appraisal completed with three currently ongoing. Resulting feedback and recommendations have been communicated internally for inclusion within ongoing considerations. Further seven sites proposed for appraisals, although staff resource is stretched with provision of cover elsewhere within delivery plan portfolio. Development ongoing of workstream flowchart for all associated Services to contribute into process, to ensure maximum benefit is derived from the staff resource investment and analysis undertaken.	Workstream flowchart developed and approved. Additional sites awaiting inspection, however staff resources currently allocated to other priority workstreams.

| Net Zero Design Standards | Determine and agree net zero design standards applicable for non-domestic new builds and refurbishments | • Review current guidance and legislation to determine the appropriate design standard for all categories
• Update and publish technical specifications and associated guidance documentation
• Information and knowledge through workshops for dissemination to relevant parties | • Production of technical standards and guidance
• Production of compliant life cycle analysis reports for new buildings
• Post occupancy evaluation demonstration of meeting operational energy targets
• Compliant building carbon strategy documentation | M1 - 08/24: Solar PV technical specification adopted for all new domestic and non-domestic applications
M2 - 01/25: Interim technical specification and guidance
M3 - 01/26: Update of interim technical specification and guidance
M4 - 08/26: Finalised technical specification and guidance published | The Net Zero & Sustainability Construction Guidance has been progressing well with a draft produced and distributed internally for comment. The draft is currently being reviewed by technical teams. | Progress has stalled over the last couple of months due to staffing resources, relating to long-term staff illness and resources in the Energy Team tasked with carrying out the review have been deployed on other priorities. The review of the initial draft is planned to take place in April by the Energy Team and external resources are being sought to cover the Design & Construction resource gap. |

Planning, Land Use and Environment

Project	Activity	Project Elements	Measures of Success	Milestones	Update - January 2025	Update - May 2025
Address Ecological Emergency	Implement priority actions identified in the Council's Ecology Strategy	• Map and quantify greening opportunities across Council Estate • Utilise biodiversity in green space to reduce grass cutting across Council Estate • Develop and deliver a suite of greening projects across Council Estate • Secure external funding to support Council and community greening projects (Nature Restoration Fund) • Strategies and policies developed aligned to the Ecology Strategy • Secure funding and further develop management plan for World Heritage site (WHS)	• 10 Council estate Greening projects delivered annually • Pipeline of projects identified, and delivered for biodiversity • Management plan for WHS finalised • Ash dieback mapped and managed across the estate • Identify number of policies to be aligned to the Ecology Strategy • Major planning apps assessed in line with NPF4 biodiversity policies • Funding secured for WHS (£600k) • Recruitment of planning ecologists	M1 - Q2 24/25: Nature Restoration Fund Community grant scheme launched M2 - Q3 24/25: Complete recruitment of Planning Ecologist M3 - Q4 24/25: Review and agree approach to Ash dieback M4 - Q4 24/25: First tranche WHS funding secured M5 - Q1 25/26: WHS staff recruited M6 - Q1 25/26: Opportunity map completed M7 - Q3 25/26: Adoption of Forestry and Woodland Strategy	M1 - Complete. M2 - Complete. The ecology planning team is now fully resourced and providing advice on major and national planning applications. M3 - Senior Arboricultural Officer recruited November 2024. Ash Dieback Plan to be developed 25/26. M4 - pending M5 - no update M6 - no update M6 - no update	M1 Complete M2 Complete M3 Started in post end March 25 M4/M5 - Staff funding secured and World Heritage Coordinator and Flow Country Partnership Manager advertised M6 - Underway - Opportunity map for Community food growing nearing completion. M7 - to be actioned this F/Y

| Nature Networks | Create Nature Networks by identifying and mapping Nature Networks in Highland and strengthening connections between them to support improved ecological connectivity | • Identify and map potential high level Nature Networks across Highland.
• Carry out workshops with partners and stakeholders to refine existing and potential new local Nature Networks
• Identify, with partners and stakeholders, and map the first phase of Loch Nature Conservation Sites (LNCSs) | • Nature Networks identified and mapped as part of the Local Development Plan.
• Identify 10 opportunities to strengthen or create new Nature Networks.
• Establish panel to identify and designate LNCSs.
• Through the planning process nature networks provide opportunities for developers to focus and deliver biodiversity enhancement obligations. | M1 - 11/24: Establish baseline GIS dataset to include statutory and non-statutory designations, HABMap and key geographical map data
M2 - 11/24: Start mapping potential existing Nature Networks (focusing on Inner Moray Firth area)
M3 - 12/24: Carry out first workshops (focusing on Inner Moray Firth area) with stakeholders to refine map-based Nature Networks
M4 - 04/25: Identify LNCS (ongoing) and start the designation process (April 2025)
M5 - 08/26: Completion of Highland Nature Networks | M1 - Baseline GIS datasets have been extracted, refined and developed to enable the analysis of nature networks. Baseline data will be subject to regular review and update as new or updated data sets become available.
M2 - A methodology to ensure the consistent mapping of nature networks is currently being developed to compliment the Nature Network Toolkit. Priority nature networks are starting to be identified, with secondary networks to be developed at a later date. It is intended that both existing (fully functioning and fragmented) and potential nature networks will be mapped, with an initial focus on the Inner Moray Firth area.
M3 - Initial stakeholder meeting to take place March 2025 to review progress.
M4 - no update | M1 - Completed
M2 - Underway for IMF, Methodology agreed and Nature Networks are currently being mapped.
M3 - Slippage - workshops likely to be instigated Q1. Initial meeting with Nature Scot to agree draft NN
Q2 -4 - wider stakeholder engagement
M4 - Underway, part of above NN programme, identify LNS sites in tandem with NN mapping. |
| Kingussie Flood Protection | The Gynack Burn, which flows through Kingussie, overtops during high rainfall events, resulting in flood damage to roads, railway, parks and buildings within the village. Previous modelling work by the Council has established the main cause of the problem being reduced capacity under road and rail bridges due to build up of sediment and gravel beneath the bridges. Flooding leads to costly and energy intensive clear up operations as well as increased watercourse maintenance works to remove the large build up of sediment that has raised the bed of the channel.
The works proposed involve the stabilisation of the banks of the Gynack Burn further upstream where erosion is prevalent, The methods proposed are green bank protection providing a natural response, reducing sediment load in the watercourse. | • Identification of environmental constraints
• Design of natural bank protection works
• Establishment of joint working with Network Rail
• Collaboration with Estate
• Procurement of Contractor to undertake works.
• Construction Works
• Monitoring | • Stabilisation of previously erodible banks
• Reduction in sediment transportation in watercourse and subsequent deposition below road/rail bridges.
• Reduction in future watercourse maintenance works (dredging)
• THC/Network Rail collaboration to deliver project.
• Progression to next section of erodible banks. | M1 - 02/24: Fluvial Audit (complete)
M2 - 04/24: Bank stabilisation design (complete)
M3 - 09/24: Return of Tenders for works
M4 - 10/24: Award construction works
M5 - 12/24: Complete works on site | As reported in November, tender returns were too high to award a contract. Review of requirements and identification of additional Contractors has been ongoing. Anticipate retendering works (M3) in December 2024, for award in January (M4), and construction February 2025 (subject to prices being acceptable) (M5).
Network Rail have indicated their continuing partnership in proposals and funding of the construction works. | External review of proposed natural bank restoration work concluded that scope of works was prohibitive to reducing value of tenders. Estate were also concerned about the scale of interventions planned. Decision taken to withdraw this particular element of works.
Ongoing review of alternative interventions is being looked at that will reduce likelihood of culvert/bridge blocking in future. No works within financial year 24/25. |

| Coastal Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP) | Within The Highland Council area, the coastal zone is home to much of the population, and contains significant infrastructure such as roads, railway lines, bridges, harbours etc. These coastal areas help to drive the economy within the Council area and as such a more adaptive approach is required to ensure our communities and infrastructure remain resilient in the future. The CCAP will provide an overview of the risks across The Highland Council coastal area, identifying locations and infrastructure that are least resilient to climate change and rising sea levels, providing a framework and flexible approach to address these risks over time | • Development of a CCAP
• Case Studies – focus on Relic Defences at 2 locations | • Develop a plan to address the highest risk areas of coastal flooding
• Improve community understanding of coastal flooding and erosion risks. | M1 - 10/24: Finalisation of Regional level Coastal Change Adaptation Plan
M2 - 04/25: Case Study Report | Some slippage in production of Regional level CCAP (M1) which is now planned December 2024.
Case study for 1 of 2 Relic Defences already being progressed at Golspie. Second location being investigated at present. April 2025 still planned for Reporting on Case Studies (M2). | Regional Coastal Change Adaptation Plan being taken to May I, E & E Committee for approval.

Case Study - Relic Defences - 1 of 2 - Golspie. Awaiting finalisation of report. Work has led to bid for further Case Study funding in 25/26 for surveys, detailed design and obtaining approvals for groyne feature at old pier.

Case Study - Relic Defences - 2 of 2 - Nairn. Project awarded to JBA Consulting to review relic defences at Nairn Beach. |

Social Housing and HRA						
Project	Activity	Project Elements	Measures of Success	Milestones	Update - January 2025	Update - May 2025
Housing Strategy/ Policy	Enhance the Council's approach to achieving the Local Housing Strategy 2023-28 Outcome 4, "Partnership and innovation builds capacity in Highland so that housing condition and energy efficiency improve and all homes to move towards net zero". This will be achieved through reviewing existing housing stock with a focus on energy efficiency status, adopting whole house retrofit approach to support the reduction of fuel poverty and improving the efficiency of Council properties in line with Net Zero Standards. Review of HRA Capital Plan to remove barriers in achieving targets while incorporating the requirement to secure external funding to support delivery.	• Review stock information to derive a clear understanding of current energy efficiency status and the works required to achieve proposed Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS). • Review HRA budget allocations • Revise area-based funding allocation to ensure that properties of the greatest need (energy inefficient, off-gas, rural properties in Council tax bands E-G) are prioritised for energy efficiency works. • Undertake feasibility studies for energy efficiency projects including costings. • Review current process for tenant opt-out.	• Approach established for achieving proposed SHNZS and alleviating fuel poverty in the Highlands • Establish accurate costing against housing stock types. • 5 whole house retrofit feasibilities completed per annum • Increased HRA capital budget allocation to energy efficiency works. • Pipeline of shovel ready energy efficiency projects • Tracking the reduction in carbon emissions (aligned with Highland Council carbon emission targets).	M1 - 11/25: Report to Housing and Property Committee outlining analysis of stock, understanding of current energy efficiency and requesting approval to change current HRA funding structure. M2 - 11/25: Review of Policy approach/Amendment Review progress of Local Housing Strategy. M3 - Ongoing: Identification of priority projects.	Analysis is ongoing as to the development of a long-term Housing Capital Plan post-2027. This analysis will take into account the findings of the stock viability assessment and also the updated financial position of the Housing Revenue Account following the revenue estimates process to Housing & Property Committee.	Delivery of the 2024-25 HRA Capital Programme is near completion and will be reported to August Housing & Property Committee. This involves a significant number of energy works across the HRA stock. The estimated HRA Capital investment in energy efficiency works is £16.9m. There have been ongoing discussions with Finance and colleagues involved in asset management as to: 1. stock viability assessment and 30-year capital programming; and 2. HRA

Energy Efficient Homes - Caol	Utilise grant funding to support the delivery of a retrofit project to 32 properties located in Caol. Properties are all Swedish Timber construction, off gas and existing roof contains asbestos. Scope of works includes; external wall insulation, removal of asbestos roof, new roof with in-roof solar, insulation lofts (where required) and installing air source heat pumps (some properties already have a heat pump). Project to achieve a minimum of 50% external funding on eligible works.	• Align delivery of retrofit works to social & private properties in Caol. • Maximise and manage external funding, including ECO4 and Scottish Government EES:ABS enabling funds. • Improve condition of housing stock and reduce fuel poverty.	• 90% of allocated properties improved • 50% (min) of external funding leveraged • 100% of properties EPC C or above • Meeting standards, including EESSH2 • Delivery of place-based project including socially and privately owned properties.	M1 - 07/24: Completion of 2 pilot properties M2 - 08/24: Building Warrants approved M3 - 06/25: Project completion M4 - 09/25: Project close report, including monitoring and evaluation	M1 - complete M2 - complete M3 - on track M4 - on track **Additional comments:** Works to private properties properties commencing 20-Jan-25, SSE Renewable has approved additional grant funding to support private households. - Distribution Network Operator (DNO) approval received - 20 properties complete	M1 - complete M2 - complete M3 - on track M4 - on track Additional comments: - 29 properties complete, pending final snagging list review and sign off - 2 further tenant opt outs midway through installations. - DNO approval received Works to 48 private properties underway, SSE Renewables has approved additional grant funding to support private households.
Energy Efficient Homes – Balintore (mixed tenure)	Utilise SHNZF, ECO4 and EES:ABS funding to support the delivery of a retrofit project to 50 properties (38 Council & 12 private) located in Balintore. Properties are all Norwegian Timber construction and off gas. Scope of works includes; external wall insulation, new windows & doors, new roof with in-roof solar, insulation lofts (where required) and installing air source heat pumps (some properties already have a heat pump). Project to achieve a minimum of 50% external funding on eligible works.	• Align delivery of retrofit works to social & private properties in Balintore. • Secure external Social Housing Net Zero Funding (SHNZF) and ECO4 funding. • Improve condition of housing stock and reduce fuel poverty. • Support regeneration of the area.	• 80% of allocated properties improved • 50% (min) of external funding leveraged • 100% of properties EPC C or above • Meeting standards, including EESSH2 • Delivery of place-based project including socially and privately owned properties.	M1 - 07/24: Submit revised project plan to SG M2 - 08/24: Procurement complete M3 - 09/24: Building warrants approved M4 - 10/24: Installations commence M5 - 06/25: Project completion M6 - 09/25: Project close report, including monitoring and evaluation	M1 - complete M2 - complete M3 - complete M4 - complete M5 - on track M6 - on track Additional comments: - 11 properties complete as at 20-Dec-24 - Community engagement event held 19-Nov-24 - DNO approval received - Private properties have been surveyed and will be included in the programme. - Officers site visit 16-Dec-24	M1 - complete M2 - complete M3 - complete M4 - complete M5 - on track M6 - on track Additional comments: - 30 properties complete as at 31-Mar-25, pending final snagging list review and sign off. - 8 Properties signed off - DNO approval received - 1 Property opt out midway through installations. 11 Private properties have been surveyed, 10 will be included in the programme.

Project	Description	Objectives	Targets/Outcomes	Milestones	Status	Status
Energy Efficient Homes – Full Retrofit Balintore (Highland Council)	Prioritise economies of scale and full house retrofit approach while delivering Energy Efficiency measures as part of Capital Investment in Highland Council properties. Utilise available capacity to deliver 2 simultaneous projects to one area, 2 project management teams – 2 contractors, same energy efficiency measures. 59.55% properties in area included. Introduce ECO4 funding to our current capital works delivery program to enhance projects scope. Properties are all Timber construction and off gas. Scope of works includes; external wall insulation, new windows & doors, new roof with in-roof solar, insulation lofts (where required) and installing air source heat pumps.	• Steer capital investment towards a retrofit approach. • Explore externally funded opportunities and mix tenure project delivery. • Improve condition of housing stock and reduce fuel poverty. • Support regeneration of the area.	• 100% of properties EPC C or above • Meeting standards, including EESSH2 and future compliance • 80% of allocated properties improved • 50% (min) of external funding leveraged	M1 - 01/24: Initial tenant engagement and opt in exercise M2 - 07/24: Two projects initiated – 2 contractors appointed M3 - 08/24: Second tenant engagement – Housing needs M4 - 09/24: Technical specifications agreed "• 100% of properties EPC C or above • Meeting standards, including EESSH2 and future compliance • 80% of allocated properties improved • 50% (min) of external funding leveraged +G25:G30" M6 - TBC: Project completion M7 - TBC: Project close report, including lessons learnt	M1 - Completed M2 - Completed M3 - Completed M4 - Completed M5 - On track M6 - On track	M1 - Completed M2 - Completed M3 - Completed M4 - Completed M5 - On track M6 - On track
GBIS - CWI for Social Properties	Utilise Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS) to deliver cavity wall insulation (CWI) to Council owned houses. Eligible properties will be insulated and ventilation upgraded (where required) as part of this project. Align delivery of HRA and private properties to create economies of scale and maximise external funding.	• Determine eligible properties • Maximise and manage external funding • Improve the energy efficiency of properties • Undertake external drill tests to confirm property suitability • Review opportunities to scale up the project	• 100 properties to receive CWI • 97% external funding leveraged • Delivery of place-based project including socially and privately owned properties • EPC improvements, including increase in SAP rating and reduction in carbon emissions	M1 - 09/24: Project approval M2 - 03/25: Project completion M3 - 05/25: Project close report, including evaluation M4 - Ongoing: Identification of priority areas	M1 - complete M2 - on track M3 - on track M4 - ongoing, initial areas have identified Additional comments: - Works commenced 2-Dec-24 - Cavity wall insulation (CWI) (virgin) only installs booked for Dec-24 - 9 CWI installs complete as of 17-Dec-24 - 2 Surveys complete - 4 Surveys booked in - Currently reviewing opportunities to expand GBIS/ ECO offering to include additional measures (i.e. ASHP, solar PV & CWI extraction)	M1 - complete M2 - on track M3 - on track M4 - ongoing, initial areas identified Additional comments: - Works commenced 2-Dec-24 - 9 CWI install complete under GBIS - All installs were complete in the Ross and Cromarty area - Project has been superseded to the D-C Highlands Project (ECO) from 6-Jan-25 to include Solar PV, ASHPs, CWI extractions and all other insulation measures excluding external wall insulation (EWI) at this stage.

| D-C Highlands - Council Properties (ECO funded) | Utilise the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding to deliver insulation measures, including cavity wall insulation extraction and fill, room-in-roof insulation, loft insulation, internal wall insulation, and cavity internal wall insulation but excluding external wall insulation (EWI) at this stage. Additionally, install Solar Photovoltaic (Solar PV) panels and Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) in Council-owned properties. Where insulation is installed, ventilation will be upgraded as required. Measures will be installed based on the properties' eligibility and suitability as outlined by the funding criteria.

Align the delivery of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and private properties to create economies of scale and maximise external funding. | • Determine eligible properties
• Maximise and manage external funding
• Improve the energy efficiency of Council properties
• Undertake external drill tests to confirm property where required suitability
• Review opportunities for fully and partially funded projects. | • % of dwellings with a SAP rating of C or above after energy efficiency works
• Leverage over £6m of external funding
• Delivery of place-based project including socially and privately owned properties
• % tenant opt-in for energy efficiency works | M1 - 01/25: Project approval
M2 - 12/25: Project completion
M3 - 05/26: Project close report, including evaluation
M4 - Ongoing: Identification of priority areas | | M1 - complete
M2 - on track
M3 - on track
M4 - ongoing, initial areas identified

Additional comments:
- Works commenced 6-Jan-25
- GBIS Project has been superseded to D-C Highlands Project (ECO funded) from 6-Jan-25 to include Solar PV, ASHPs, CWI extractions and all other insulation measures excluding external wall insulation (EWI) at this stage.

Progress to date:
- 38 Surveys booked
- 90 Surveys complete
- 130 Installs booked
- 63 Properties complete
- 10 Partially installed properties
- 12 CWI Extractions complete
- 10 CWI fills complete total
- 73 Solar PV installs complete
- 4 ASHP installs complete
- 53 Refusals
- This has been completed mostly in the Ross and Cromarty area and we have now started contacting properties in Caithness from WC 10.03.25 |

Waste

Project	Activity	Project Elements	Measures of Success	Milestones	Update - January 2025	Update - May 2025
Recycling Infrastructure Improvements across the Estate	Introduce twin-stream recycling systems across the Council Estate to accelerate progress towards meeting targets. Reducing non-recycling waste and increasing the quality and quantity of recycling will reduce carbon emissions associated residual waste treatment, additionally, costs associated with waste disposal and processing recycling will reduce. These changes will also be accompanied by the expansion of food waste collection in specific geographical areas.	• Benchmarking recycling rates in schools to gauge progress. • Improve recycling infrastructure across the Council estate through the roll out of twin-stream recycling systems. • Expand the food waste collections in schools and other Council premises in specific geographical areas. • Targeted communications campaign to support the roll out of new recycling systems. • Development of Waste E-learning module as part of Mandatory Net Zero training	• 15% reduction of total waste by 2025 • Reduce food waste by 33% by 2025 • Recycle 70% of remaining waste by 2025 • Send no more than 5% of remaining waste to landfill by 2030 • Cost savings benefits (£0.365m 24/25 and £1.695m 25/26 – total external and internal waste) associated with waste disposal. • Net reduction in carbon emissions	Recycling infrastructure improvements initiated aligned to the following phased service change timeline: M1 - 05/24: Ross & Cromarty M2 - 07/24: Nairn and Inverness M3 - 09/24: Badenoch & Strathspey M4 - 10/24: Sutherland M5 - 11/24: Caithness M6 - 03/25: Skye & Lochalsh M7 - 04/25: Lochaber	Targeted communications issued to staff in HQ, Inverness; Nairn; Drummuie and and Wick. Waste e-learning module in development.	•Twin-stream recycling infrastructure rolled out to date in Dingwall County Buildings; HQ, Inverness; Wick; Drummuie, Nairn and Osprey House. •Communications issued on Staff Connections, Viva Engage and targeted comms to staff at the above locations. •Recycling infrastructure will be piloted in Kingussie High School and Inverness Royal Academy, with a view to building the case for resource to enable the further roll-out of infrastructure to all schools across Highland. •Kingussie High School, outwith food waste collection area, will also consider piloting composting. •Waste audits undertaken in Kingussie High School and Inverness Royal Academy during March to benchmark waste and recycling rates in schools and to inform recycling infrastructure requirements. •Waste audit scheduled for HQ, Inverness for w/c 28 April. •Representatives from CCET and Waste attended FM Area Meetings in March (North and South) to highlight the roll-out of recycling infrastructure, the pilot projects, and to seek feedback from FM staff.

| Re-Use Portal | Develop and pilot an in-house portal to redistribute resources within the organisation such as furniture, fixtures, fittings, school materials and office consumables.

Additionally, identify companies that would purchase used furniture, and/or organisations/charities that would take assets no longer required by the Council to avoid items being sent for disposal | • Development of platform that allows activities to be user-led or automated to minimise the resources required to run the platform
• Development of guidance including items that can be redistributed via the portal (e.g. ICT equipment must be returned directly to ICT)
• Identification of companies and/or organisations/charities that would buy or reuse assets no longer required by the Council | • Reduced procurement spend
• Reduced waste disposal costs
• Minimisation of waste
• Reduced associated carbon emissions
• Cost avoidance – subscription fees of using an external provider in respect of the portal | M1 - 01/25: Develop and test portal
M2 - 02/25: Draft guidance to address potential issues such as electric items with no current PAT test; suitably trained officers for heavy lifting; expected minimum condition of furniture etc.
M3 - 02/25: Launch and promotion of portal
M4 - 08/25: Evaluate pilot | | •Several cross-service meetings have been held with representatives from CCET, Waste, Facilities Management, Business Support and Asset Management. The pilot was also highlighted at the FM Team Meetings (North and South) held in March.
•Draft processes developed regarding the redistribution of Council assets.
•Storage remains a key challenge. A number of assets are currently stored at Dochfour Huts which are due to be demolished. Asset Management team will look to create an inventory for Dochfour, including items reserved. The team are also looking to identify an alternative storage location.
•New Start Highland have expressed interest in terms of bulky items whilst the Highlands & Islands Climate Hub have advised they would be able to share potential opportunities with community groups etc. Information can also be included in the Community Briefing issued fortnightly by the Council to Community Councils and Social Enterprises.
•ILM Highland have expressed interest in electrical items.
•Colleagues from CCET, Waste and Asset Management have met with the Secretariat to the Environment and Economy Leaders' Group (EELG) who are looking to find opportunities to recycle unwanted office furniture; mainly in the Inverness area. This was followed up with an introductory meeting with Forestry Land Scotland.
•The Asset Management team is working with Principal Estates Surveyor, Scottish Government, representing the EELG group on asset consolidation and aligning the Council's approach with their single Scottish estate project/concept. |

Sustainable Travel						
Project	**Activity**	**Project Elements**	**Measures of Success**	**Milestones**	**Update - January 2025**	**Update - May 2025**
Sustainable Travel Through Operational Efficiencies	The Council currently utilises a range of vehicles for business travel including white fleet (vehicles under 3.5T), grey fleet (employee owned vehicle use for work purposes), car club and car hire. This project aims to conduct a comprehensive review of these travel methods with the aim of optimising costs, reducing carbon emissions and improving efficiency while ensuring compliance with relevant policies and regulations.	• Data collection: - Gather data on white fleet, grey fleet, car club and casual car hire. - Review relevant policies, contracts and existing reporting mechanisms • Analysis and reporting • Develop comprehensive reporting detailing findings and recommendations for potential cost savings and emission reductions • Dashboard design • Create a user-friendly dashboard that integrates relevant data and established key performance indicators for efficient business travel • Implementation and training • Pilot dashboard with key services and gather feedback • Monitoring and continuous improvement	• Improved vehicle utilisation in alignment with prescribed travel hierarchy • Utilise data to inform demonstrable reductions in travel costs across all Services • Utilise data to inform demonstrable reductions in emissions across all Services • Improved fleet utilisation through the reduction in use of more expensive travel options • Adoption of use of dashboards across Services	M1 - (Date TBC): Data collection M2 - (Date TBC): Delivery of analysis report M3 - (Date TBC): Dashboard prototype developed M4 - (Date TBC): Pilot testing of dashboard completed M5 - (Date TBC): Dashboard rollout M6 - (Date TBC): Training/comms around use of dashboards M7 - (Date TBC): Implementation review	Discussions held with Finance and Transport & Logistics. CiA now has reporting capabilities, and an access request has been submitted to enable data extraction. This request is currently under review.	High-level data will be presented to Members as part of a separate report on this agenda - Net Zero Thematic Group Update - Sustainable Business Travel.

Active Travel	Developing infrastructure to enable and encourage staff to choose active travel is a key area of focus highlighted in the Council's Net Zero Strategy. An employee travel survey will be conducted in Autumn 2024 to provide an updated evidence base to help identify actions to support a shift in travel choices for employee travel for commuting and work-related purposes.	• Develop, implement and analyse an employee travel survey • Refresh the existing Travel Plan for the Council HQ building in Inverness, considering both health and wellbeing, equalities and sustainability requirements • Design and facilitate focus groups with staff to help encourage greater engagement with the Highland Council Travel Plan • Provide a summary presentation/briefing of survey findings and subsequent actions/approaches as appropriate • Work with key stakeholders such as HITRANS to maximise impact	• Increase in active travel • Removal of barriers to staff using active travel	M1 - 09/24: Creation of an online employee travel survey M2 - 10/24: Focus Group sessions held M3 - 12/24: Production of a summary presentation/ briefing with findings and subsequent actions M4 - 01/25: Refreshed Highland Council Travel Plan M5 - 01/25 and ongoing: Delivery of actions	Climate Change and Energy Team, in collaboration with the Sustainable Transport Team are currently reviewing and providing feedback to further develop the questionnaire.	Concerns highlighted regarding length and design of survey. Initial cross-service discussions suggest survey is reframed to provide baseline data to assist in planning for asset rationalisation and the provision of fleet vehicles etc (e.g. staff location/working patterns/etc). Survey questions/design to be reworked.
EV Policy	Development of policy around the efficient use of council-operated electric vehicles (EVs) charging infrastructure.	• Development of policy • Development and delivery of communications and training to support the policy implementation	• Increased network availability • Enhanced staff awareness and behavioural change • Mitigated reputational risk for the Council	M1 - 04/25: Policy Drafted M2 - 05/25: Present draft policy to Communities & Place Committee for approval M3 - 06/25: Roll out of communications and training		Initial working group meeting held - currently reviewing examples of best practice.
Elected Member Travel	Develop reporting to provide meaningful and understandable information regarding Member Travel, including associated costs and carbon emissions.	• Review of current Member Travel including mode e.g. car club, lift share, own vehicle (grey fleet) • Create a user-friendly dashboard that integrates relevant data • Implementation and training in respect of dashboard • Identify champion to encourage other Members to carpool, use car club or alternatives to trave	• Adoption of dashboard • Reduction in mileage, leading to decreased carbon emissions and costs • Improved utilisation of Council vehicles e.g. car club instead of Grey Fleet • Increased levels of lift share, carpooling	M1 - 03/25: Data collection M2 - 05/25: Delivery of analysis report to Climate Change Committee M3 - 05/25: Identification of champion M4 - 05/25: Development and testing of dashboard M5 - 06/25: Training/comms around use of dashboard		High-level data will be presented to Members as part of a separate report on this agenda - Net Zero Thematic Group Update - Sustainable Business Travel. As highlighted in the report, there are limitations around the development of a dashboard due to the availability of data.

Light Fleet - Optimal Utilisation	Review utilisation levels and actual business requirements for the Council's light fleet.	• Develop a vehicle report template to highlight and report key metrics • Analysis of fleet data and individual vehicle reports to adopt a data driven approach for determining the optimal fleet size • Identify underutilised vehicles and opportunities to downsize the fleet or vehicle size, and determine where vehicles could be shared to ensure full utilisation • Strengthen guidance around misuse of vehicles to develop awareness across all members of staff as to the appropriate use of vehicles	• Improved fleet utilisation • Transition of high grey fleet usage/mileage to fleet vehicles • Reduction in the use of more expensive travel options, such as casual car hire • Additional financial savings, including reduced maintenance and insurance costs	M1 - 03/25: Data modelling completed M2 - 04/25: Completion of high-level Light Fleet Utilisation reporting M3 - 05/25: Individual vehicle reporting template finalised M4 - Ongoing: Monitoring and engagement with Services		High-level data will be presented to Members as part of a separate report on this agenda - Net Zero Thematic Group Update - Sustainable Business Travel.
Light Fleet - Process	Comprehensive review of process to acquire a new fleet vehicle or replace an existing vehicle. Staff will be signposted to alternative options such as Car Club where mileage does not justify allocation of a fleet vehicle. In cases where a vehicle is approved, a ULEV will be provided as standard wherever possible. The process will also consider the opportunity to 'pool' vehicles to ensure the correct size and type of vehicle is utilised. This would negate the need to lease larger vehicles required infrequently (e.g. where a smaller vehicle is sufficient most of the time).	• Review whole end to end process for light fleet • Develop new process and form for instigating a request for new or replacement light fleet vehicles • Develop decision making process / hierarchy to outline where a dedicated light fleet vehicle may not be the most appropriate option	• Data driven decision making • Robust approval process • Increased scrutiny • Cost and carbon savings	M1 - 04/25: Identify Key Performance Indicators M2 - 04/25: Review and revise current processes and policies M3 - 05/25: Light Fleet Request platform developed, tested and launched M4 - Ongoing: Monitoring		CCET have obtained the current acquisition / replacement form used by Fleet, and have initiated a plan on shaping this into an online form. This will have benefits including; •Automation wherever possible, freeing up resource while reducing potential for human error while enhancing the 'user experience' • A review of questions and business case requirements to ensure correct size and type of vehicle are supplied, including low emission wherever suitable •Estimated costs (both up front and whole life + emissions) available at the time of submitting a form to provide an evidence base to base decisions on CCET to pilot new business process modelling software.

| E-Bike Scheme | As part of the Council's approach to fleet decarbonisation, the Council has participated in an E-cargo bike pilot scheme for business travel. The pilot has highlighted challenges around the storage of bikes; charging/storage of batteries; and staff being unable to use the bikes for commuting purposes due to insurance exclusions. Initial feedback has suggested e-bikes would be preferable for several teams that have participated in the pilot. Further work is required to determine the future delivery model. | • Evaluation of E-cargo bike pilot
• Assess leasing options to include the provision of e-bikes/e cargo bikes, servicing, maintenance and insurance
• Undertake comparison of resources (staffing and costs) to deliver in-house vs leasing
• Work with key stakeholders such as HITRANS to determine future delivery model, including the feasibility of a shared scheme with partner organisations/open access to the public | • Expansion of accessible e-bike scheme
• Alleviation of current challenges regarding maintenance and insurance
• Increased uptake of low-emission business travel
• Reduction in fleet usage and associated emissions and costs | M1 - 01/25: Evaluation of pilot
M2 - 02/25 Identify journeys currently undertaken using fleet vehicles, where use of an e-bike may be more appropriate
M3 - 03/25 Comparison of costings
M4 - 08/25 Determine future delivery model following discussions with partner organisations | | •HITRANS have purchased the E-cargo bikes following Velocity going into liquidation.
•A new loan agreement, between HITRANS and the Council, is in development.
•The E-cargo bikes have been serviced and repaired, where necessary.
•Highland Council's Bikeability Instructors recently completed Cycling Scotland E-Cargo bike training to deliver road safety training to local primary schools.
•Storage and charging of the bikes remain an issue.
•HC to explore feasibility of upgrading the HQ bike shelter to include charging facilities and whether this would be eligible under the Active Travel Workplaces Grant within the People & Place Programme.
•The Council has a small number of e-bikes (5) which require servicing/maintenance. Several Council employees have expressed interest in having access to an e-bike as an alternative to a fleet vehicle. Request made for funding from the Local Authority Direct Award for servicing the e-bikes.
•Meeting date to be firmed up with HITRANS regarding business use of Hi-Bike scheme available in Inverness and Fort William.
•Meeting to be set up with Sustainable Travel Policy and Delivery Team Lead, Transport Scotland, regarding lessons learnt/examples of best practice. |

Net Zero Delivery

Project	Activity	Project Elements	Measures of Success	Milestones	Update - January 2025	Update - May 2025
Capital Projects - Net Zero	The Highland Council is committed to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions, in line with national targets. Capital projects represent the Council's largest source of carbon emissions, making it crucial to adopt a rigorous approach to reducing these emissions. An assessment process for capital projects will be developed to ensure statutory climate and ecological targets are met.	• Working group established. • Develop clear guidance for incorporating Net Zero into Capital Project planning and design. • Develop pilot projects to validate and refine the approach. • Establish a framework to track and report on metrics and weighting as outlined in Capital Programme Bid Evaluation and Prioritisation Matrix approved by Council on 14/03/24. • Revise policy documents reflecting the integration of Net Zero considerations.	• Establish business case model to ensure consistency of assessment of projects • Approval of guidelines and implementation of process • Successful delivery of two pilot projects that demonstrate whole life cost approach • Approval of standardised business case documentation and reporting frameworks for all new Capital Projects • 100% compliance with new guidelines adopted after policy change	M1 - 08/24: Project initiation M2 - 11/24: Development of clear guidance M3 - 11/24: Develop pilot projects M4 - 01/25: Implementation of framework M5 - 03/25: Policy updated and approved by Council	Representatives have been identified to form a cross-service working group to progress. The first meeting of the working group will be held on 20/01/25.	As agreed at the Capital Board on 24/03/25; the Climate Change & Energy Team will now lead on developing a process that measures and monitors embodied and operational carbon in all projects with a view to achieving reductions in line with the Council's Net Zero Strategy. A high-level approach will be presented to the Capital Board on 28/04/25; following which, the approach will be developed further in collaboration with colleagues cross-service. An additional interim milestone has been set to bring the final version of the Climate Change Impact Assessment and guidance to the Capital Board on 28/04/25.

Thematic Group

Sustainable Business Travel

Project

Transitioning the Light Fleet

Responsible Officer:
Service Lead (Transport and Logistics)

Net Zero Programme

Senior Responsible Officer:
Climate Change & Energy Manager

Project Sponsor:
ACE - Place

Activity

Within our light commercial fleet (vehicles under 3.5T), Highland Council has introduced 93 low emissions vehicles, representing 13% of the light fleet total (715 vehicles). The 93 low emission vehicles can be broken down to 30 electric and 63 petrol hybrid.

The Fleet Service will continue to implement a prioritised fleet replacement programme to transition the light fleet to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV).

Project Elements

- Replacement of 41 diesel small light commercial vans with 41 plug-in hybrid small vans
- Development and roll-out of staff training/induction process around the use of ULEVs and charging infrastructure
- Policy around the efficient use of council-operated EVs charging infrastructure (this project element was brought to the Climate Change Committee in January but is highlighted as an essential component in transitioning the light fleet)

Measures of Success

- Increase in number/percentage of ULEV vehicles in the Council's fleet
- Reduced carbon emissions and running costs

Milestones

07/25: Policy on EV infrastructure use
09/25: Training on use of ULEVs and Charging Infrastructure
11/25: Replacement of 41 vans

Programme Theme 4) A Sustainable Highland Environment and Global Centre for Renewable Energy

Links to Performance Plan targets:

4.7 (i)

Links to Programme:
Place – Achieve our Net Zero Targets
People – Promote greener transport

Key Risks

- Delivery timescales of vans from manufacturer
- Perceived barriers/preconceptions around using ULEV vehicles e.g. charging and range anxiety

Thematic Group

Net Zero Strategy Group

Project

Inverness Castle – Sustainable Operations

Responsible Officer:
Head of Inverness Castle Experience

Net Zero Programme

Senior Responsible Officer:
Climate Change & Energy Manager

Project Sponsor:
ACE - Place

Activity

The Inverness Castle Experience (ICE), set to open in 2025, aims to become a premier visitor attraction. There is an expectation ICE will look to attain gold standard in the Green Tourism Award, as an exemplar to tourist attractions throughout the Highlands.

Measures of Success

- Environmental, Social and Governance solutions embedded in operations and practices
- Implementation of measures to reduce carbon footprint
- Achievement of sustainability certification
- Enhanced reputation – competitive advantage

Project Elements

- Baseline assessment – review current/proposed sustainability practices
- Identify and address key operational, environmental and engagement factors across core sustainability themes, including: Energy & Carbon; Water Use; Waste Management; Sustainable Procurement; Biodiversity & Nature; Community & Destination Engagement; Transport & Travel; and Communication & Marketing.
- Implement sustainable technologies and policies
- Apply for certification

Milestones

03/25: Identify cross-service representatives for working group
04/25: Inception meeting of working group
04/25: Assess current & proposed sustainability measures
05/25: Set goals – identify key focus areas
07/25: Engagement
07/25: Develop training and educational resources
10/25: Implement sustainable policies & technologies
01/26: Apply for certification, working with assessors
Ongoing: Continuous monitoring and improvement

Programme Theme 4 A Sustainable Highland Environment and Global Centre for Renewable Energy

Links to Performance Plan targets:

4.7

Links to Programme:
Place – Achieve our Net Zero targets

Key Risks

1. Cost of sustainability measures are prohibitive
2. Gold standard is not achieved
3. Operations fail to align with policy intention
4. Appropriate staff resource not available
5. Low uptake
6. Low Partner/Community Support.

Net Zero Programme

Thematic Group

Waste

Project

Reusable Lunch Packaging Pilot

Responsible Officer:
CCFM Project Co-ordinator

Senior Responsible Officer:
Climate Change & Energy Manager

Project Sponsor:
ACE - Place

Activity
Pilot reusable lunch packaging in Kingussie High School with the aim of reducing the amount of single-use canteen containers disposed of.

This activity is part of a wider project to benchmark waste and recycling rates in schools.

Measures of Success
- Reduced procurement spend
- Reduction in waste, associated disposal costs and carbon emissions

Project Elements
- Conduct waste audit to identify baseline waste composition and associated carbon and cost.
- Identify and implement recycling infrastructure requirements in KHS.
- Communication and engagement activities to support the roll out of new infrastructure and reusable pilot.
- Roll-out reusable lunch packaging to Kingussie High School.
- Promote, support and integrate waste hierarchy principles into the Sustainable Learning Settings' 4 C's (Curriculum, Campus, Culture and Community) through engagement, learning and incentives.

Milestones
03/25: Waste audit undertaken at Kingussie High School
03/25: Cross-service meeting held with representatives from KHS, Facilities Management, Catering, Waste and CCET
09/25: Programme of Communication and Engagement activities to support the roll out of recycling infrastructure and reusable pilot
09/25: Roll out of recycling infrastructure at KHS
09/25: Roll out reusable Lunch packaging at KHS
04/26: Evaluate pilot and consider further roll-out

Programme Theme 4) A Sustainable Highland Environment and Global Centre for Renewable Energy

Links to Performance Plan targets:

4.6	4.7

Links to Programme:
Place – Achieve our Net Zero Targets
Reduce residual waste and increase re-use and recycling
Links to Delivery Plan:
Food in Schools: Delivering Sustainability

Key Risks
- Lack of buy-in (pupils and staff)
- Return of reusables
- Operational pressures (collection and washing of reusables)

Thematic Group

Waste

Project

Members' Catering

Responsible Officer: Strategic Lead – Waste Strategy and Operations

Net Zero Programme

Senior Responsible Officer:
Climate Change & Energy Manager

Project Sponsor:
ACE - Place

Activity

At the January Climate Change Committee, Members requested a project template be developed and brought to the May Committee regarding Members' catering and the potential to reduce food waste.

Avoidable food waste costs Scotland £1.1billion a year. A third of all food produced globally is thrown away, while food production and consumption account for around a third of global greenhouse gas emissions. When we waste food, we also waste all the energy and resources that went into producing, processing, transporting, and cooking it.

Measures of Success

- Reduced food waste
- Reduced costs

Project Elements

- Review current process for ordering catering
- Assess feasibility to introduce process to determine understanding of in-person Member attendance (will require Member engagement)

Milestones

05/25: Review current process
08/25: Provide recommendations to Members Group

Programme Theme 4) A Sustainable Highland Environment and Global Centre for Renewable Energy

Links to Performance Plan targets:

4.7

Links to Programme:
Place – Achieve our Net Zero Targets

Key Risks

- Failure to engage with process