

Environmental, Climate Change and Carbon Management Issues - Update

Committee Strategy and Programmes

Date of meeting 30 August 2019

Date of report 1 August 2019

Report by Assistant Chief Executive

1. Object of report

To update the Committee on SPT's activities in relation to environmental, climate change and carbon reduction issues.

2. Background

- 2.1 Members will be aware of the significant recent increase in interest in climate change, carbon reduction and environmental issues around the world. From large scale protests querying the scale of action being undertaken to address climate change through to declarations of a 'climate emergency', there has never been a greater focus on environmental issues, and from that, a potential increase in public expectation that greater action will occur as a result.
- 2.2 In relation to the transport sector, it became the largest emitter of carbon in Scotland in 2015, taking over from energy supply¹. In 2017, transport in Scotland was again the largest source of net emissions - even when International Aviation and Shipping are excluded - with a 32.1% share. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC)² has noted that transport is now Scotland's biggest sectoral challenge in terms of carbon emissions, highlighting that emissions from transport in Scotland have increased each year since 2010, with a further 2% increase overall in 2016³.
- 2.3 In Scotland, and in light of advice received from the CCC, the Scottish Government intends to set a new target date of 2045 for reaching net-zero emissions through a Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Bill, currently progressing through the Scottish Parliament. If it becomes statute, the new target will be the most ambitious national climate change target in the world. Amendments to the Bill also raised the ambition of the 2030 and 2040 interim targets to 70% and 90% emissions reductions respectively. Furthermore, the Scottish Government has pledged to phase out new petrol and diesel cars and vans across Scotland by 2032. The Scottish Parliament's Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee voted in

¹ Transport Scotland Carbon Account for Transport No.9, 2017 edition:

https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/41051/sct1117431438-1_ts_carbonaccount_p5.pdf

² The CCC is an independent non-departmental public body, formed under the Climate Change Act (2008) to advise the UK and devolved Governments and Parliaments on tackling and preparing for climate change.

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/>

³ The Committee on Climate Change's (CCC) 2018 Progress Report to the Scottish Parliament -

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-emissions-in-scotland-2018-progress-report-to-parliament/>

favour of the amendments and new targets for the Bill at Stage 2 of the parliamentary bill process on 18 June 2019.

- 2.4 SPT has continually sought to reduce its impact on the environment, both organisationally and through the work of SPT and partners in delivering improvements to the transport network of the west of Scotland in line with the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). Members will recall⁴ that in 2017, the Partnership approved a new SPT Carbon Management Plan, which set a new vision, objectives, and actions in relation to carbon management. The Plan also included a new target that by the end of financial year 2024/25, SPT will have reduced its carbon footprint by 35%, based on 2008/09 levels.
- 2.5 The following section gives an update on some of our key areas of action and significant external factors impacting on current and future plans.

3. Update

3.1 Regional Transport Strategy

The current Regional Transport Strategy has a focus on carbon reduction, with “Reduced Emissions” being one of the key Strategy Outcomes. However, the new RTS currently in development will, in light of some of the issues highlighted in section 2 above, need to take a stronger stance on climate change and carbon emissions. Climate risks will be included in the evidence base, and both adaptation and mitigation will feature in the implementation plan. A new Strategic Environmental Assessment is being undertaken, and the objectives for climate change identified in this process will be integrated into the new RTS.

3.2 Climate Change Duties

Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009⁵ placed a duty on public bodies relating to climate change. The duties require that a public body must, in exercising its functions:

- Act in the way best calculated to contribute to delivery of the Act’s emissions reduction targets;
- Act in the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programme; and
- Act in a way that it considers most sustainable.

- 3.3 In 2015, the Scottish Government introduced an Order⁶ requiring public bodies listed therein, including Regional Transport Partnerships like SPT, to report annually to Scottish Ministers on their compliance with the Climate Change Duties. Through that process, the bodies are required to set out what actions they have undertaken in the previous year to help tackle climate change, provide details of the contribution their activities make towards carbon emissions, and their plans for the future. SPT’s submitted annual reports 2014-2018 in relation to the Climate Change Duties are available on the Sustainable Scotland Network website⁷. It is proposed that SPT’s

⁴ SPT Carbon Management Plan report: http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/rtp230617_agenda8.pdf

⁵ The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/12/pdfs/asp_20090012_en.pdf

⁶ The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2015/347/contents/made>

⁷ SPT Climate Change Duties – submitted reports – 2014-2018:
<https://sustainablescotlandnetwork.org/reports/strathclyde-partnership-for-transport-spt>

Climate Change Duties annual report for 2018-2019 – due by end November 2019 - will be presented to the next Committee.

3.4 SPT Carbon Management Plan

Progress on the delivery of SPT's Carbon Management Plan has been very positive. Noted below are some current key projects:

- SPT internal Carbon Management communication initiative to staff;
- Subway - new pumps with variable speeds;
- Roll-out of energy efficient lighting across operational footprint;
- Separate metering for each shop unit at Buchanan Bus Station (BBS);
- Digital - offsite software migration/energy efficient data storage and servers; and
- Initiatives to be identified as part of Buchanan Bus Station refurbishment.

3.5 Progress towards the target for 2024-25 of reducing SPT's carbon footprint by 35% from the 2008-09 baseline has been significant. For 2017-18, the reduction was 42%, meaning the target has been surpassed. To put this in perspective, at the time of preparing the Carbon Management Plan in 2017, the equivalent figure for the previous year (2015/16) was 19%. It is worth highlighting however, that the Grid Emissions Factor – which is used to calculate the amount of carbon emissions produced – has been reduced substantially over recent years, and this will have had a significant positive impact on progress towards target. Given this, and the current issues outlined in section 2 above, a full review of SPT's Carbon Management Plan and target, and organisational approach to environmental issues will be undertaken in order to further align with new national policy, targets, and timescales, and to ensure SPT takes a stronger, more ambitious approach in delivering the change required.

3.6 As can be seen from section 3.4, the current focus of SPT activity in reducing carbon impacts is through addressing electricity usage. While this is delivering results, it is likely that the focus of SPT future activity arising from the above proposed review will cover a much wider range, including recycling, vehicles and others. It is also worth highlighting that there is £100,000 allocated to Carbon Management initiatives at 'Category 2' in SPT's Capital Programme for 2019-2020 should any additional projects become deliverable during this financial year.

3.7 Climate Adaptation

SPT, alongside a range of other councils and public bodies, including NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and Transport Scotland, is a member of the Climate Ready Clyde initiative. Climate Ready Clyde was established in 2016 to create a shared vision, strategy and action plan to enable Glasgow city region to adapt to climate change. The group brings partners together to work strategically to minimise the risks and seize the opportunities climate change brings for our economy, society and environment.

3.8 Climate Ready Clyde has prepared various reports in relation to risks and opportunities, investment toolkit (enabling the screening of capital investment/major projects for climate adaptation issues), and a report on the economic implications of climate change for the Glasgow city region. The development of a Glasgow City Region Climate Adaptation Strategy has now been proposed by Climate Ready Clyde. It is proposed that SPT endorses the development of this new Strategy, in line with already committed supporters including the Glasgow City Region Cabinet, CBI Scotland and the CCC.

3.9 Climate Emergency

Growing concern about the challenge of addressing climate change has recently culminated in protests across the UK, Europe and the world. A main catalyst for this concern was the announcement in March by the United Nations that there were 'only 11 years left to prevent irreversible damage from climate change'⁸.

3.10 In response, in April 2019, the First Minister of Scotland declared a 'climate emergency' and this was followed by a statement to the Scottish Parliament in early May 2019 by the Climate Change Secretary. Since then, climate emergencies have been declared around the world, including in France, Ireland and Canada. Within the SPT area, the following councils have declared a climate emergency: Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire.

3.11 The expected implications of declarations of a climate emergency are that there will be more concerted effort and action in tackling climate change. As transport is one of the main sources of harmful emissions, there is an expectation that this is a sector where significant change is required and will happen. This expectation in turn will lead to greater pressure on all those tasked with delivering transport in Scotland to address climate change concerns and deliver towards national policy and targets.

3.12 Through both the developing Regional Transport Strategy, and the full review of our organisational approach to carbon management and environmental issues proposed at section 3.6 above, within available resources SPT will seek to ensure that the necessary level of consideration of carbon, climate change and environmental issues is taken into account in all our activities and decision-making processes to minimise our impact to a level appropriate and in line with national policy and targets.

4. Conclusions

This report summarises the key environmental, climate change and carbon management issues SPT is working on or monitoring at present. As can be seen from the above, this is a time of unprecedented interest and expectation in relation to tackling those issues, and it is essential that SPT plays its part both organisationally and through transport policy, strategy and delivery across the west of Scotland.

5. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to:

- Note the contents of this report;
- Note that SPT's Climate Change Duties annual report for 2018-19 will be presented to the Committee in November 2019;
- Note that a full review of SPT's Carbon Management Plan and target, and organisational approach to environmental issues will be undertaken over the next year; and
- Endorse the development of a Glasgow City Region Climate Adaptation Strategy by Climate Ready Clyde.

⁸ UN Press Release: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/ga12131.doc.htm>

6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>In line with the RTS.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>SPT has legal obligations to report progress on carbon reduction under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>In line with SPT's Equality Outcomes.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>Failure to contribute positively to carbon reduction and climate change could lead to significant environmental impacts and costs.</i>

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