Committee report

SPT

Climate Change and Carbon Management Issues - Update

Committee   Strategy and Programmes

Date of meeting   20 November 2020   **Date of report**   26 October 2020

Report by Chief Executive

1. Object of report

The object of this report is to:

- Update the Committee on the progress of the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan;

- Inform the Committee of SPT's Climate Change Duties annual reporting for 2019/20; and

- Update the Committee on the development of Actions for Carbon Management in support of the SPT Carbon Management Plan.

2. Update

2.1 Scottish Government Climate Change Plan

The Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 received Royal Assent on 31 October 2019. Members will recall the key provisions within the Act which made statutory the target to reduce Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045 at the latest, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030, and 90% by 2040.

To show how those targets would be achieved, the Scottish Government committed to publishing a Climate Change Plan, which would set the context and agenda for other national, regional and local public and private sector partners to follow in collectively achieving the statutory targets set. For SPT, this would include, for example, the Carbon Management Plan and the developing Regional Transport Strategy.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the need to take into account the deep and wide-ranging impacts of the crisis, has necessitated a delay to publication of the plan. The Scottish Government has now advised that they anticipate the Climate Change Plan will be laid before the Scottish Parliament before the end of 2020.

Worth highlighting as a key input to the Plan is the recent annual report[1] on Scotland's progress by the UK Climate Change Committee (UKCCC), which was submitted to the

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[1] https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-emissions-in-scotland-2020-progress-report-to-parliament/

Scottish Parliament in October. The key findings of the UKCCC in this most recent report, and their suggested priority areas for the Scottish Government include:

- Deliver an updated Climate Change Plan which puts Scotland firmly on course to become a Net Zero economy by 2045;

- Develop a UK Emissions Trading System that is aligned to Net Zero, in partnership with the UK Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive;

- Set out a vision for the future of low-carbon heating in Scotland's homes and other buildings, integrated with UK Government decisions on the future of the UK gas grid and energy taxation;

- Develop a new rural support scheme that builds towards Scotland's climate goals;

- Make it easy for people to walk, cycle, use public transport, and work from home in Scotland, and ensure electric vehicle charging infrastructure and other enabling measures are in place to eliminate the need to buy a petrol or diesel car in Scotland by 2032 at the latest;

- Lead a strong cross-government response to the most urgent national climate change risks set out in the third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment due to be published in summer 2021;

- Accelerate investments in low-carbon and climate adaptation infrastructure to stimulate Scotland's economy, build long-term productive capacity and improve climate resilience; and

- Engage with people and businesses in Scotland to develop skills for the net-zero transition, help people understand what the transition means for their lives, and make it easy to make low-carbon choices.

Officers will continue to take account of, monitor and engage as necessary in relation to the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan, and similar plans by councils and others, and will keep the Committee updated as matters progress.

2.2 SPT Climate Change Duties annual reporting for 2019/20

In line with the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties arising as a result of Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, SPT has a duty to report progress annually on reducing its impact on climate change. Since the pilot year of 2014/15, SPT has submitted the required information within deadline to the Scottish Sustainability Network (SSN), the custodian body for reporting, and which is subsequently made publicly available on the SSN website[2].

SPT's carbon footprint for 2019/20 was 4,286 tCO2e[3], the majority of which came from electricity usage on the Subway, specifically traction for the trains. This is a reduction of 11% on the previous year of 2018/19, and a 57% reduction on our baseline year of 2008/09. While acknowledging that this reduction is in some part due to changes made at UK level in the grid emissions factor (the measure by which the amount of carbon generated by electricity is calculated), it shows positive progress and serves as added impetus for SPT to continue to show leadership in reducing carbon use. It is worth highlighting that the lockdown imposed in late March 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic only had a relatively small impact on SPT's figures.

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[2] https://sustainablescotlandnetwork.org/reports/strathclyde-partnership-for-transport-spt
[3] Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

The chart below shows the changes in SPT's level of carbon reduction since the baseline year of 2008/09:

SPT Carbon Footprint 2008/09 -2019/20 (tCO2e)
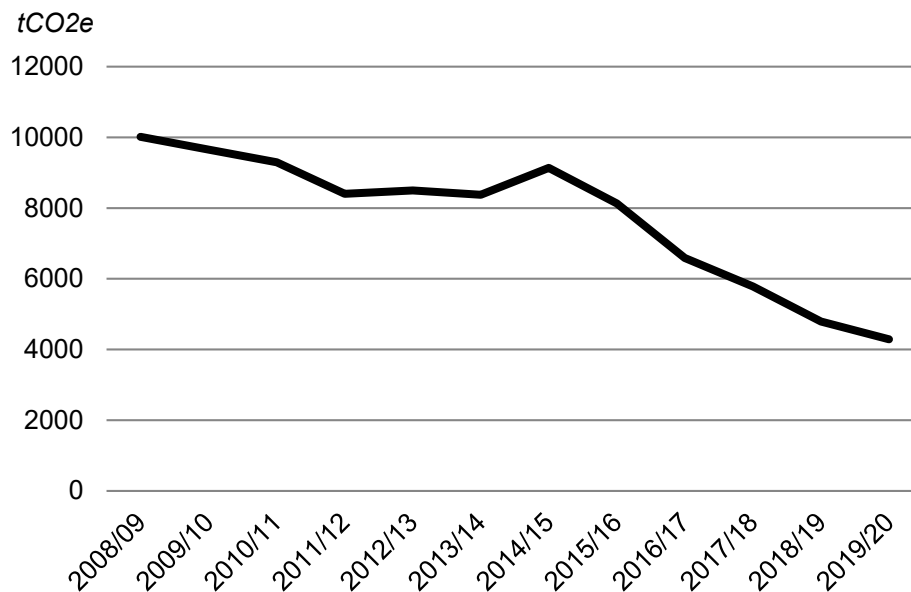
2.3   SPT Actions for Carbon Management

Members will recall that at its meeting in December 2019[4], the Partnership approved a new SPT Carbon Management Plan, with a new vision, objectives, and target for carbon management. In addition, a series of initial Actions for Carbon Management were also approved. However, focus on mitigating the negative impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic has naturally been the dominant priority through most of this year and this has therefore impacted on progress made in that regard. Nonetheless, continued positive progress in terms of carbon reduction (as highlighted in the section, 2.2), impacts of Covid-19, and changes to the timescale for publication of the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan noted above, provide the opportunity to revise and strengthen SPT's Actions for Carbon Management. Should the Climate Change Plan be published by the end of the year as anticipated, officers will take account of its provisions and present an updated series of Actions for Carbon Management and associated timescales to the Committee for approval in 2021.

3. Conclusions

3.1   The full scale and impact of the Covid-19 crisis across a range of sectors, including the environment, climate change and carbon reduction remains to be seen. Nevertheless, interest in these issues and the climate emergency as a whole continues to be high. Members will be aware that the statutory targets set by the Scottish Parliament for carbon reduction are among the most ambitious in the world, and therefore there is keen interest and expectation in regards to the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan.

3.2   SPT has made good progress on carbon reduction, as can be seen in section 2.2, and the Carbon Management Plan target commits SPT to continue contributing to progress towards those set at national level:

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[4] http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SPTP131219_Agenda8.pdf

> *SPT Target for Carbon Management: "To contribute to the delivery of national targets (including interim targets) set by the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Target) (Scotland) Act 2019 no later than prevailing statutory timescales, while also taking into account timescales set by our partners."*

3.3 In seeking to continue delivering towards that target, upon publication of the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan, officers will review and update timescales of SPT's Actions for Carbon Management to fit and complement those at national and local levels, and will bring forward proposals for approval by the Committee. Similarly, the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan proposals will be taken into account in developing the new Regional Transport Strategy.

4. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

5. Consequences

Policy consequences	*In line with the current RTS, and the new developing RTS will have a strong focus on climate change, carbon management and environmental issues.*
Legal consequences	*None at present.*
Financial consequences	*None at present.*
Personnel consequences	*None at present.*
Equalities consequences	*The impacts of climate change and any policies to mitigate its effects will need to be closely monitored for impacts across equality groups.*
Risk consequences	*None at present.*

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Title	**Assistant Chief Executive**	**Title**	**Chief Executive**

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