

MINUTES of MEETING of the MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Council Chambers, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith on Tuesday, 24 November 2015 at 11.00 am.

Present:- Councillors Milligan (Chair), Beattie, Bennett, Baxter, Imrie, Montgomery, Muirhead, Pottinger, Russell, Wallace and de Vink..

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors, Coventry, Imrie and Young

1 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were intimated.

2 Minutes

The Minutes of Meeting of 20 October 2015 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

3 Submission to Scottish Government: Compliance with Climate Change Duties 2014/15

With reference to paragraph of the Minutes of the Cabinet of 17 November 2015, there was submitted report, dated 17 November 2015, by the Director, Resources, incorporating a report, dated 10 November 2015, by the Head of Communities and Economy recommending the submission to Scottish Government of the Council's Statement of Compliance with Climate Change Duties for 2014/15, which accompanied the report. The report explained that 2015/16 would be the first year when there would be a statutory requirement for a report on compliance, in the form of an official template completed by the Council and which required to be submitted to the Scottish Government by 30 November 2016. To test the emerging template, the Council had agreed to a Ministerial request to complete it in respect of 2014/15, for submission by 30 November 2015. A 'Recommended' section of the emerging template, relating to the Council's wider influence (i.e. beyond corporate emissions and associated with the community, etc.) had not been completed for this reporting year; however the intention was to do so for 2015/16. The completed template for 2014/15 was therefore incorporated into the report.

The report highlighted that:-

- The Council's corporate emissions comprised those within the scope of the Council's Carbon Management Plan (i.e. associated with the Council's estate, fleet and street lighting) as well as those associated with staff commuting and non-fleet business mileage (both within the scope of the Council's Travel Plan);

- Total corporate emissions had fallen from 27,237 tCO_{2e} in 2006/7 to 23,513 tCO_{2e} in 2014/15;
- Corporate emissions within the scope of the Carbon Management Plan had fallen from 23,142 tCO_{2e} in 2006/07 to 18,191 tCO_{2e} in 2014/15 (although the format of the template did not make this clear);
- Corporate management plan emissions from the Council's estate (i.e. operational buildings) had fallen from 17,850 tCO_{2e} in 2006/07 to 12,795 tCO_{2e} in 2014/15;
- Corporate emissions associated with staff commuting were estimated to have risen from 3,721 tCO_{2e} in 2006/7 to 4,899 tCO_{2e} in 2014/15 (although the format of the template did not make this clear);
- Corporate emissions associated with non-fleet business mileage (claimed only, assuming an 'average car') were estimated to have risen from 365 tCO_{2e} in 2006/7 to 423 tCO_{2e} in 2014/15 (although the format of the template does not make this clear). Although the average car had become "greener" during this period, business miles had been rising fairly consistently, from approximately 1,192,457 in 2006/7 to 1,388,295 in 2014/15; and
- The 'Top 5' priorities for climate change governance, management and strategy for the "year ahead" (2015/16) in paragraph 2f of the template were a positive response to the Minister's call and represented what was increasingly expected of local authorities in terms of climate change response.

The Cabinet, in respect of the report, had agreed, *inter alia*, on 17 November as follows:-

- (a) To approve the statement attached to the report on Compliance with the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties for 2014/15 ; and
- (b) To approve the submission of that statement to Scottish Government by 30 November 2015.

Thereafter, the Head of Communities and Economy, answered questions put by Elected Members.

Decision

- (a) To note that steps were being taken to record unclaimed mileage in respect of Council business;
- (b) To note that local authorities would be seeking improvements to the template to make it more "user friendly" ;
- (c) That officials should analyse the reported increase in business mileage having regard to the reductions in the numbers of buildings in use; the reductions in the overall numbers of staff; and the increase in the incidence of home working;

- (d) To note that not all new development sites would be optimal in reducing carbon emissions;
- (e) To note that the availability of a new “Climate Change Tool” would allow the Council to more accurately measure its progress in measuring carbon emission reduction;
- (f) That officers should produce an interim statement on progress prior to the Summer 2016 recess in respect of this matter;
- (g) To note that it may be possible to reflect in future reports measures taken by the Council to generate renewable energy, which would offset the level of carbon emission;
- (h) To note that all reductions in carbon emissions would result in cost savings to the Council but that the principal priority was to secure reductions in carbon emissions;
- (i) That Elected Members be provided with information on the savings generated and the carbon emissions reduced by the introduction of solar panels in new Council housing; and
- (j) To endorse the decisions on the Cabinet.

(Action: (c); (f); (i) Head of Communities and Economy).

The meeting terminated at 11.40 am.