

**Corporate Climate Change Strategy**  
**Corporate Climate Change & Sustainable Development Action Plan 14/15****Report by Ian Johnson, Head of Communities and Economy****1 Purpose of Report**

To ask Cabinet to approve the attached Corporate Climate Change Strategy and Corporate Climate Change & Sustainable Development Action Plan 2014/15.

**2 Background**

- 2.1** Best Value legislation requires arrangements for securing continuous improvement in Council functions, balancing quality and cost while having regard to the 'four 'E's': efficiency, effectiveness, economy and equal opportunities; and doing so "in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development." The importance of arrangements which secure such a contribution is underscored by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 ('CCSA'), which requires the Council to exercise its functions "in a way that it considers is most sustainable."
- 2.2** Sustainable development is best understood in terms of the shared UK/Scottish goals of, and priorities for, sustainable development. The shared goals are a strong, healthy and just society; and living within environmental limits. The shared priorities are sustainable consumption and production; natural resource protection and environmental enhancement; sustainable communities (embodying the sustainable development goals locally); and, importantly in terms of this report, climate change and energy.
- 2.3** The Council's Best Value arrangements are set out in its Best Value Framework, and include those for securing the above contribution set out in its Sustainable Development Framework: the Council's Sustainable Development Policy Statement (interpreting the 'four 'E's' in terms of whole-life and whole-system costs, long-term outcomes, underpinning the UK/Scottish sustainable development goals and priorities, etc.), community planning, self-assessment toolkits for service planning purposes, an annual corporate 'Sustainability Action Plan', an officer group, and a sustainable development statement in all relevant reports.
- 2.4** Official Best Value guidance states how and where the contribution should be demonstrated. In considering this report at its meeting on 26 March 2014, Corporate Management Team noted that two particular areas of strategy mentioned required further attention: "sustainable development requirements ... in the procurement strategy" and the "strategy in response to climate change".

- 2.5** The Council's strategy in response to climate change is particularly important as all Scottish Councils are signatories to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, committing them to climate change action and to updating CoSLA annually on progress. Moreover, the CCSA requires public bodies to contribute to meeting national greenhouse gas reduction targets and to helping deliver the Scottish programme for adapting to the impacts of a changing climate, due out later this year.
- 2.6** To clarify the Council's approach to climate change, Cabinet is asked to approve a short, high-level 'mainstreaming' strategy. The Council has made considerable progress in recent years in reducing its own operational greenhouse gas emissions (a 21.5% equivalent carbon dioxide reduction between 2006/7 and 2012/13), but this strategy concerns itself with greenhouse gas emissions for which the Midlothian *area* is responsible, and to adapting to the inevitable impacts arising from a changing climate.
- 2.7** To underpin the strategy, Corporate Management Team has agreed that the annual Sustainability Action Plan should be evolved into a 'Corporate Climate Change and Sustainable Development Action Plan'. The 2014/15 Action Plan, attached as Appendix 2, addresses the above procurement issue; its other main focus, delivering on commitments in the existing and emerging Single Midlothian Plan, relates to addressing climate change impacts through the Council's Risk Management Framework.

### **3 Report Implications**

#### **3.1 Resource**

The proposals contained in this report can be met from current budgets and human resources.

#### **3.2 Risk**

The proposals contained in this report are considered necessary for ensuring that the Council continues to demonstrate Best Value. It should also be noted that Scottish Ministers may instruct investigations into a public body's CCSA compliance.

There are operational, reputational and legal risks associated with failing to adapt to a changing climate. The Council's current financial strategy identifies "Extreme weather events ... and provision for immediate response as well as longer-term implications" as a key risk.

#### **3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation**

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☒ Community safety
- ☒ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☒ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

### **3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

Reducing greenhouse gases and adapting to a changing climate are Single Midlothian Plan outcomes, with tackling climate change a 2014/15 priority. The Strategy and Action Plan are a commitment in the Planning and Development Service Plan 2013/14.

### **3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

The Scottish Parliament Finance Committee has stated that preventative spending could have impact in "major areas of policy such as the early years, climate change and health and social care". The impacts of failing to tackle climate change will fall hardest on the poorest and least able to respond, in matters such as higher energy bills.

### **3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders**

Not applicable.

### **3.7 Ensuring Equalities**

There are no direct or other significant equalities implications arising from the strategy and action plan. Therefore, Equalities Impact Assessment was not required.

### **3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development**

The Strategy and Action Plan are intended to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. They relate to matters of a corporate/operational nature as opposed to ones that are public in character, and as such are not subject to the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

### **3.9 IT Issues**

None.

## **4 Recommendations**

- 4.1** It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Corporate Climate Change Strategy and Corporate Climate Change & Sustainable Development Action Plan 2014/15.

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#### **Background Papers:**

None