AGENDA ITEM No. 5

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

18 SEPTEMBER 2025

Report by Director of Environment

UPDATE ON GET TO ZERO ACTION PLAN

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update the Cabinet on progress against the Get to Zero Action Plan which outlines the Council's plans to tackle climate change from 2024-2045.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Cabinet is recommended to note the updates on the Get to Zero Action Plan Delivery Plans for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

BACKGROUND

- 3. In November 2022 the Cabinet approved a target for the Council to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2045, for both direct (i.e. gas/water/fuel) and indirect (i.e. electricity) emissions. This aligns with the national target for net-zero emissions as set out in the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019.
- 4. The Council published the Get to Zero Action Plan (GTZAP) in February 2024. The GTZAP sets out the actions that the Council needs to take to reduce its operational emissions, reduce area-wide (i.e. those from the community), and prepare for the changing climate. The plan covers a period from 2024 until 2045.
- 5. The GTZAP aligns with Scottish Government policy objectives for tackling climate change but acknowledges that timeframes will differ nationally and locally. The action plan is dependent on available funding to support the investment required and appropriate technology, expertise, standards and guidance being available to support a transition to net-zero.
- 6. This report focuses on the delivery of actions, with some commentary on how this is helping to reduce emissions and prepare for the changing climate. A detailed report on emissions is made to Cabinet each year, with the latest report to Cabinet on 6th March 2025.

REPORT

7. An initial plan (called the *Year 1 Plan*) was agreed by senior officers in November 2023 and covered the period to April 2025. A 2nd annual plan (*Year 2 Plan*), covering the 2025/26 financial year was agreed by the Get to Zero Board in May 2025.

- 8. The Get to Zero Board was established in September 2024 and is chaired by the Director of Environment. It consists of senior officers from each council department, Health & Social Care Partnership, and East Renfrewshire Community Leisure Trust. The Board has a remit to:
 - i. Monitor progress against agreed project parameters and agree any corrective actions or project changes;
 - ii. Ensure an appropriate overview and appraisal of projects can be provided;
 - iii. Make decisions on interventions and changes required to any projects. Where appropriate, recommendations may be made to Cabinet or Corporate Management Team for decisions;
 - iv. Establish, monitor and report on programme risks, reporting on these annually to Cabinet: and
 - v. Consider strategic issues related to climate change mitigation and adaptation, including the relationship with partner agencies and national networks.

Year 1 Plan (2024/25)

- 9. The highlights of progress to date against the Year 1 Plan includes:
 - i. Property Asset Management Plan for all council buildings published;
 - ii. Phased programme of flat-roof replacement and boiler replacement commenced;
 - iii. Heat network feasibility studies for Eastwood Park and Barrhead Main Street completed;
 - iv. Recruited officer and managing agent in order to maximise funding from Scottish Government to tackle fuel poverty through home energy efficiency measures. The expenditure of the grant award for EES:ABS (area-based funding from Scottish Government) increased from 59% in 2023/24 to 100% in 2024/25;
 - v. Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy published;
 - vi. Local Housing Strategy published;
 - vii. New building standard for 'clean heating' implemented, whereby new homes no longer have gas heating;
 - viii. 27 carbon baseline audits with local businesses completed;
 - ix. £37,000 granted to 6 businesses to support renewable energy and energy efficiency works:
 - x. LED street-lights now covering 100% of network;
 - xi. Full business case for new Balgray train station completed
 - xii. Concessionary charges for electric vehicle (EV) charging to citizens with no offstreet parking introduced;
 - xiii. 10,000 trees planted, taking the total planted to 32,000 since 2022;
 - xiv. Biodiversity Officer recruited to lead Council's work on nature and biodiversity;
 - xv. Carbon Literacy training delivered to 21 senior staff, 99 core delivery staff and 8 councillors, with 2 staff trained to deliver in-house training;
 - xvi. Staff Climate Network established with 60 staff participating;
 - xvii. New Climate Change Impact Assessment process issued with more data-based approach;
 - xviii. With Trading Standards Scotland, published and promoted an 'Energy Marketing Scams' toolkit: and
 - xix. Partnered with Barrhead Housing Association to design net-zero homes in Blackburn Square.

- 10. Of the 86 actions that were agreed in the Year 1 Plan, the following summary highlights how many of these were delivered:
 - i. 53% were completed;
 - ii. 17% are on track for completion in 2025/26, in line with expectations;
 - iii. 3% were due for completion in 2025/26 but will now be completed in 2026/27;
 - iv. 23% were cancelled due to changing circumstances; and
 - v. 7% are not going to be completed in line with the original expectations.
- 11. The cancelled or re-programmed actions were all the result of:
 - i. 3rd party (e.g. Scottish Government) changes; or
 - ii. resources being prioritised to other work; or
 - iii. a different action now being pursued.
- 12. The most significant change was the decision to pursue stock condition surveys for all council properties. This will see all properties in the council estate being surveyed. This impacted other actions that had been planned and resulted in them being cancelled or reprogrammed.

Year 2 Plan (2025/26)

- 13. The Year 2 Plan is summarised in Appendix A. There are 68 actions that will be started in 2025/26 with some of those being completed in 2026/27.
- 14. Some highlights of the Year 2 Plan are highlighted below:
 - i. Complete year-1 programme of stock condition reports for all 220 property assets, including an assessment of suitability for net-zero measures (e.g. solar panels, heat-pumps);
 - ii. Prepare business case for investing in solar energy generation on council properties;
 - iii. Complete assessment plan for all services to transition cars/vans to EVs;
 - iv. Commence rollout of phase 1 of the expansion of the public EV charging network with approximately 180 new charge points installed over a 3-year period;
 - v. Publish a Local Transport Strategy, outlining the priorities for action in the next 10 years:
 - vi. Publish an updated design guide for new-build social homes, reflecting the legal and GTZ requirements;
 - vii. Increase the number of staff trained in 'carbon literacy', from 109 to 140, including training for educators, targeting 30 teaching and school staff; and
 - viii. Publish a Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment for East Renfrewshire.

Impact on emissions

15. The report to Cabinet on 6th March 2025, which updated on the latest carbon emissions for council operations suggested that the Council is not on track to achieve its 2045 net zero target based on current projections. From 2019/20, emissions need to reduce by an estimated 850 tCO2e every year until 2045. Excluding waste management emissions, which are likely to remain quite stable because of the long-term nature of the Clyde Valley Waste Partnership contract, emissions have reduced by c.503 tCO2e per year since 2019/20. This indicates the Council will not reach its target without taking more action.

- 16. Across the Council each year, projects and actions are carried out that contribute to the adaptation and mitigation of climate change. The following section highlights a selection of those undertaken in 2023/24, which will impact future reporting years.
 - i. Neilston Learning Campus opened its doors in February 2024. This major development project brought together Neilston Primary School, St Thomas's Primary School and the Madras Family Centre into one new building. The campus was commissioned to meet the Scottish Futures Trust's (SFT) energy efficiency top band target of 70 kWh/m2/p.a. This is achieved by high levels of insulation and airtightness, and utilising clean heating systems. Clean heating systems refers to 'zero direct emission heating systems' (e.g. Air Source Heat Pumps), as defined in the draft Heat in Buildings Bill. Full impacts of the building's performance will be reported to Cabinet in quarter 4 of 2025/26. Should the new building achieve the SFT target, it will save around 170tCO2e in emissions compared to the three buildings it replaced. This represents a 1.3% reduction in total operational emissions for the Council.
 - ii. The new Eastwood Leisure Centre is designed to be built to a high energy efficiency standard and utilise clean heating systems. When built, it is predicted emissions will be reduced by 37% in comparison to the building it replaces. This represents a 3.9% reduction in total operational emissions for the Council.
 - iii. By 2026/27 the Council will have consolidated its corporate offices. This includes the closure of the Spiersbridge office, which represents a 0.3% reduction in total operational emissions for the Council.
- 17. Properties account for 75% of all the Council's operational emissions, excluding supply chain emissions. Actions that focus on property provide the most significant opportunity for emissions reduction within the GTZAP:
 - i. Converting from current higher carbon heating systems to 'clean' heating systems;
 - ii. Improving insulation, doors, windows and roofs to reduce consumption of energy for heating;
 - iii. Reducing consumption of electricity through the use of solar panels, energy efficient lighting and converting to lower energy plant and machinery; and
 - iv. Moving to electric vehicles for council fleet to reduce fuel consumption.
- 18. The costs of these actions are significant and the Council is unlikely to make major progress without funding from 3rd parties. The Council is not alone in facing this challenge and continues to explore funding and new investment models with COSLA and other councils across the city region.
- 19. Although supply-chain emissions are not included in the scope for the 2045 net-zero target, actions to reduce the impact of the purchases made by the Council are still a focus in the Year 2 Plan. Specific actions that are planned, include:
 - Complete a review of supply chain emissions from our building and construction services and identify product/service categories where carbon reductions can be achieved;
 - ii. Complete a review of supply chain emissions from our **digital** equipment and identify product/service categories where carbon reductions can be achieved;
 - iii. Complete a baseline review of carbon emissions from the **roads resurfacing programme**;

- iv. Undertake a review of Carmunock Road, Busby (a lower-carbon resurfacing project from 2024) to understand the potential emissions savings and identify any engineering concerns with a view to further rollout.
- v. Complete a trial of alternative low-carbon material for road resurfacing on an active travel or foot path.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

- 20. There are no immediate staff, revenue budget or capital budget implications from this report.
- 21. It was noted in the report to Cabinet in February 2024, where the Get to Zero Action Plan was approved, that there are significant cost implications for delivery of the GTZAP. It was noted that as much as £370m capital investment could be required in the period up to 2045 and that additional actions will be progressed through the budget strategy and capital planning processes, or external funding will be pursued. This remains the case, with delivery of major actions such as property retrofits or transitioning to electric vehicles still to be fully costed and considered by Cabinet.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

- 22. The GTZAP Delivery Plan relies on a network of partners and stakeholders to bring success. Some of these are highlighted below:
 - i. Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) the network is an invaluable source of information sharing, policy development and improving staff capability. SSN is also the appointed administrator for the annual statutory climate change data return:
 - ii. Climate Ready Clyde this network of all Glasgow City Region councils and other partners is focused on delivering the regional Climate Adaptation Strategy;
 - iii. Scottish Climate Intelligence Service this partnership between University of Edinburgh and the Improvement Service is working to improve the data collection, analysis and reporting on area-wide emissions and actions'
 - iv. Glasgow City Region Working Group on Housing Retrofit the network is valuable in sharing good practice in relation to retrofitting homes with energy efficient improvements and zero-emission heating.
 - v. Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) forum this is co-organised by the Improvement Service and Scottish Government to share policy developments and methodology updates with regard to LHEES; and
 - vi. Funded by Scottish Government, Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire has established a Climate Action Hub. Although in its early stages, it is expected to become a key interface with the community on climate change issues.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

23. There are no immediate climate change, property, legal, data, IT or H&S impacts relating to this report. Relevant actions from the GTZAP Year 2 plan will be assessed as they are proposed or commissioned.

CONCLUSIONS

- 24. The Council published a Get to Zero Action Plan in February 2024, setting out the actions required until 2045 to achieve net-zero carbon emissions and prepare for the changing climate.
- 25. The first Delivery Plan, covering the period to April 2025, has led to 70% of the 86 actions being delivered in line with expectations. Of the remaining 30%, most of the actions have been unable to progress due to changing priorities, national policy not progressing, or lack of access to sufficient funds.
- 26. The Year 2 Delivery Plan (2025/26) was agreed by the newly-formed Get to Zero Board in May 2025. 68 actions are planned to be started in this year with some completed in 2025/26 and some in 2026/27. These are detailed in Appendix A.
- 27. This will continue to reduce emissions, but without more significant actions relating to how property is managed, the Council is still not forecasting to achieve its 2045 net zero carbon emissions target. It is recognised that investment in actions for property is significant and will be challenging to progress without further 3rd party funding.

RECOMMENDATION

28. Cabinet is recommended to note the updates on the Get to Zero Action Plan Delivery Plans for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

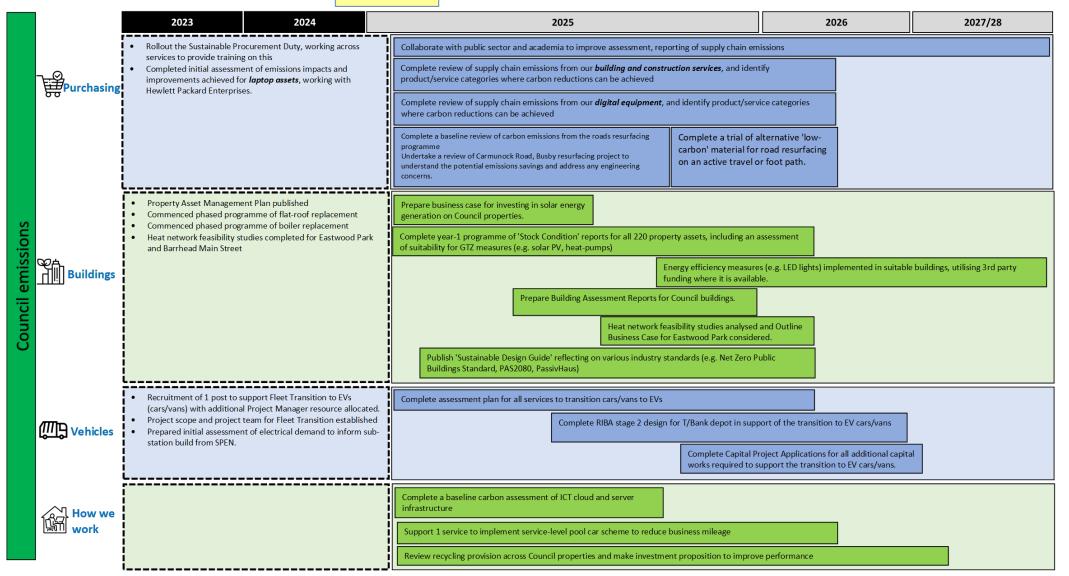
Director of Environment

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Appendix A: Year 2 Get to Zero Delivery Plan (2025/26)

Year 2 Plan Starts



Year 2 Plan Starts 2023 2024 2025 2026 2027/28 Recruited EES:ABS officer and managing agent to maximise Through continued engagement with Scottish Power Energy Complete initial scoping of Local Area funding from Scottish Government to tackle fuel poverty Networks (SPEN), assess grid constraints and the scale of upgrades **Energy Planning for East Renfrewshire** Heat/Power through energy efficiency. Grant award for EES:ABS increased required on capacity to inform the viability of projects. for homes & from baseline of 59% awarded in 2023/24. Complete report on the potential for Complete Heat Network feasibility studies for potential heat Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy published. ground-source heat pump communal businesses network areas identified in the LHEES Local Housing Strategy published. project in a specific area within East Improved ERC website to signpost energy efficiency support to Renfrewshire Develop a portfolio of potential renewable and low-carbon projects, which might attract investment through grant funding, all tenure properties. working with community groups Working with Glasgow City Region Councils and Strathclyde University via the EXTEND programme, complete carbon Support homeowners to improve the EES:ABS grant usage rate to 100%, helping more homes to improve baseline report with 20 companies Completed 27 carbon baseline audits with businesses. community Grant support of £37k to 6 businesses for renewable energy Provide minimum 20 companies with Get to Zero grant funding in 24/25 & 25/26, informed by energy audits and energy efficiency works. LED street lights covering 100% of network Install 20mph speed limits in all Completion of grant-funded capital works associated with the 16 Completed review of Council car parks to inform a suitable residential roads Neighbourhood Traffic Management Zones identified in 2024/25. development of parking management plan. Full business case for new Balgray train station. Commence rollout of phase 1 of the expansion of the Develop car park tariff strategy and emissions (Whole Introduced concessionary charges to citizens with no off-street implement new infrastructure for paid public EV charging network with approximately 180 new parking for electric vehicles. parking at selected sites charge points installed over a 3 year period. Refreshed maintenance contract for electric vehicle charging points. **Publish updated Active** Publish a Local Transport Strategy, outlining the priorities for action in the next 10 years. Travel Plan Transport i Develop a prioritised 'Project Pipeline' for active travel Complete travel plans for Council offices, including infrastructure to allow targeted funding bids, based on feasibility campus-locations studies completed for 5 active travel corridor Complete construction of new Balgray train station Area-wide 10 Council homes retrofitted with external wall insulation to Complete a report on the costed options Publish an updated 'Design Guide' for new-build test effectiveness and affordability. for low-carbon new-build Council homes social homes, reflecting the legal and GTZ Completed Passivhaus potential assessment of 100 properties Council in the future. requirements to check practicality and affordability. homes Complete archetype assessment of options for Council homes to achieve the Social Housing Develop an investment strategy to achieve Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) Complete energy assessments in 500 Council homes per year Completed planting 10,000 trees. Complete 4 projects to support nature and biodiversity from the Nature Restoration Fund Identified Council-managed open-spaces suitable for rewilding or tree planting. Complete a review of grass-cutting to promote meadowland that supports nature and biodiversity Recruited Biodiversity Officer to lead Council's work on nature Planning Complete Open-Space Strategy Complete evidence gathering for Local Development Plan 3 Reach 'Proposed Plan stage' of Local Development Plan 3 Publish an updated Biodiversity Action Plan Complete Capelrig Burn project, funded by SEPA, to naturalise the river course, supporting biodiversity and flood management

Year 2 Plan Starts 2023 2024 2025 2026 2027/28 E PA Get to Zero Action Plan published, alongside Strategic Update approach to public body reporting, incorporating new mandatory Scope 3 reporting Environmental Assessment. Communication Established Get to Zero Board to support progress against & Transparency Action Plan. ______ Carbon literacy training delivered to 21 senior staff, 99 core Carbon Literacy Training delivered to increase the number of staff trained from 109 to 140 delivery staff and 8 Councillors. 2 staff trained to delivery Carbon Literacy Training. Carbon Literacy Training 'for educators' delivered to 30 teaching and school staff. Established Staff Climate Network with 60 number of staff participating. Identify and co-ordinate role-specific climate training for core delivery staff **Enabling actions** Co-ordinated ERC role in new Scottish Climate Intelligence Data/Capability (Publish Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment for East Renfrewshire New Climate Change Impact Assessment process issued with more data-based approach. Complete implementation of new e-learning module that is available for all staff With Trading Standards Scotland, published and promoted an Via Barrhead Housing Association, build a demonstration property at Blackburn Square (Barrhead), to highlight how net zero 'Energy Marketing Scams' toolkit buildings can support adapted living Trading standards completed a monitoring exercise of doorstep energy marketing activities and promote the Trusted Complete a series of trading standard communication activities on low-carbon home improvement services Traders from the home energy sector. available locally, counter-acting bogus or scam services being promoted. **Partnerships** Via Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire, launched a Climate Complete trading standards (e.g. consumer law and rights) training to traders delivering low-carbon home Working with Barrhead HA to design Blackburn Sq net-zero improvements in East Renfrewshire

