NORTH LANARKSHIRE

ACT NOW
NORTH LANARKSHIRE
ACTION ON CLIMATE TOGETHER

Action on Climate Together Briefing **April 2021**

nlp
North
Lanarkshire
Partnership

ACT Now Briefing on the Climate Emergency

1. The Global Climate Emergency

Driven in part by our current economic model, our collective habit of overconsumption and ever-increasing carbon emissions, we have embarked on a tragic journey towards ecological breakdown and a climate emergency. To quote a recent update from the United Nations

"No corner of the globe is immune from the devastating consequences of climate change. Rising temperatures are fuelling environmental degradation, natural disasters, weather extremes, food and water insecurity, economic disruption, conflict, and terrorism. Sea levels are rising, the Arctic is melting, coral reefs are dying, oceans are acidifying, and forests are burning. It is clear that business as usual is not good enough. As the infinite cost of climate change reaches irreversible highs, now is the time for bold collective action."

However, the UN's Secretary-General António Guterres pointed out in September 2020, *"the climate emergency is a race we are losing, but it is a race we can win".*

The UN climate change conference – COP26 – was due to take place in Glasgow in November 2020 but due to the COVID 19 pandemic has been rescheduled to November 2021. The COP 26 website states:

"The climate talks will be the biggest international summit the UK has ever hosted; bringing together over 30,000 delegates including heads of state, climate experts and campaigners to agree coordinated action to tackle climate change.

The challenge is not insignificant, but we must step up to it to save the environment we all live in. The UN Climate Change process is central to that collective action."

Whilst COVID 19 is a major global challenge and is adversely affecting all aspects of life, the climate emergency is an even greater challenge. If we do not take effective measures to reduce global warming in the next years, negative impacts on human health, economy and society will increase and, in the longer term, even threaten human survival. All of us, therefore, have a responsibility to be informed, support government and business measures take action in our own lives to reduce carbon emissions.

2. Scottish Policy

The Scottish Government takes the climate emergency very seriously and is supporting action to reduce carbon and other greenhouse emissions through the public and business sectors and by supporting the public to adopt a low carbon lifestyle. The Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan and Report from February 2018 set out the wide range of actions needed to reduce carbon and other greenhouse emissions across all areas of life in Scotland, including agriculture and land use, buildings, energy, transport and waste. This is supplemented by a range of supporting policy and legislation including energy strategy and Climate Change Acts.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 sets out duties for Public Sector Bodies with regards to carbon management with the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 amending the 2009 Act by setting the goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2045, five years earlier than the UK Government's target.

As part of its Climate Change programme, the Scottish Government established the Just Transition Commission to advise the government on transition to a net-zero economy which is fair to all – supporting environmental sustainability **and** economic and social inclusion. This is sometimes referred to as a "wellbeing economy". In June 2020, The Commission published a report on Green Recovery, which recommends a strong focus on developing infrastructure, skills and jobs that support a fair, net-zero transition as integral to C19 recovery.

The "green recovery" approach includes investment in low-carbon or carbon-free technologies and processes to support environmentally sustainable economic and social activities including:

• energy (renewables)
• agriculture, food production and distribution
• homes, other buildings and physical infrastructure
• transport
• manufacture and distribution of clothing and other products

To support this low-carbon recovery, the Scottish Government have created a £100million Green Jobs Fund. This new Green Jobs Fund will include development in areas including nature-based tourism, land and environmental management, forestry, green finance, and low carbon farming. £50million of the Fund will be invested through public bodies to provide sustainable and low carbon products and services to create jobs, while the other £50m will be invested to support businesses across a range of sectors including manufacturing, tech and "land-based organisations", to take advantage of public and private investment in low carbon infrastructure to create jobs.

As part of the Scottish Governments Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan (SCESAP) initiative, the Green Jobs Workforce Academy, will support existing employees and those who are facing redundancy to assess their existing skills and undertake and focus on "a national mission for new, good, and green jobs". These opportunities are expected to come from:

- the transition to renewable heat, which is expected to create between 16,000 and 17,000 skilled jobs over the next decade

- Scotland's offshore wind sector which the Scottish Government deems possible by 2030

- continued development of mature technologies, such as onshore wind and solar, and innovative ones, like tidal and floating wind, needed to meet our net-zero target

A green recovery also requires major reduction in waste - even zero-waste. The Scottish Government is developing new legislation to reduce waste by supporting the "circular economy" to enable society to "**reduce** consumption, **reuse** products and **recycle** waste" much more effectively than currently.

The [UK Committee on Climate Change](#) estimates that only about 40% of necessary reduction in emissions can be achieved through low carbon or carbon-free energy and technologies, which means the other reductions must be achieved through changes in the way we live. This is referred to by the Scottish Government as [Low Carbon Living](#). This requires public engagement to understand the challenge of climate change and what they need to do to support transition to net-zero – including applying the reduce-reuse-recycle approach to every aspect of their lives.

Given such major behaviour change is complex, requiring inter-dependent changes in:

- individuals' beliefs and habits
- collective social norms
- and "material" supports such as affordable renewable energy and sustainable food production

The Scottish Government is promoting a scientific approach to supporting population behaviour change called [Individual-Social-Material](#) (ISM).

During 2019, the Scottish Government also commissioned Keep Scotland Beautiful to support a [Big Climate Conversation](#) with events held in many parts of Scotland, although unfortunately not North Lanarkshire. A report from this consultation was published in January 2020 in which it was concluded that action to tackle the climate emergency must:

- take a holistic and integrated approach - spanning environmental, social and economic issues

- be supported by local and national leadership to change our social and economic environment so low carbon is either the only option or easiest option
- enable a just transition which supports economic and social inclusion and reductions in inequality
- support involvement of all sectors of society

The Scottish Government's commitment to an inclusive, green recovery supports its commitments to deliver the [UN Sustainable Development Goals in Scotland](#) which includes action to tackle the climate emergency as well as tackling poverty, advancement of [human rights and equality](#) and improvements to public health.

These commitments are reflected in the [Scottish Government's Performance Management Framework](#), including outcomes regarding an inclusive and sustainable economy, our environment and health.

On the 16th December 2020, the Scottish Government published an updated [Climate Action Plan – Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net-zero](#) to reflect the changed world due to the COVID 19 pandemic and to emphasise its commitment to a green recovery from C19 that would tackle the climate emergency whilst promoting health and wellbeing and human rights and reducing inequalities. To quote from the ministerial forward to the updated Climate Action Plan:

"That is why we have committed to a 'green recovery' from COVID-19, one which captures the opportunities of our just transition to net zero. That means creating green jobs, developing sustainable skills and nurturing wellbeing. This approach recognises climate change as a human rights issue and the transition to net zero as an opportunity to tackle inequalities. It is an approach that is fundamentally important to the future prosperity of our people and planet".

The Scottish Government's six public health priorities also fully support a just transition and an inclusive and green recovery from COVID-19 and include a commitment to creating a Scotland where we:

- live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities
- have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all

In January 2021 the Scottish Government published the updated Scottish Procurement Policy Notes (SPPN's) 1/2021. The purpose of this policy note was to provide advice and guidance to support actioning opportunities to improve environmental wellbeing through three key procurement criteria;

- circular economy considerations
- recent climate change reporting duties
- current procurement policy and legislation

The publication highlights how public bodies should use their public procurement spend to support climate and circular economy ambitions. This aligns with new regulations introduced in November 2020 which require Scottish public bodies to report on, where applicable, *"targets for reducing indirect emissions of greenhouse gases"* by 2022. To support this the Scottish Government's Sustainable Procurement Tools are available to all public bodies and include indicators and guidance to support Scottish public sector buyers to consider and act on a number of climate change considerations.

Between November 2020 and March 2021 a group of 100 diverse citizens met as a Scottish Climate Assembly to consider "how should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?" The Assembly's interim report was considered by the Scottish Parliament at the end of March 2021.

The Assembly's Report and linked Statement of Ambition is addressed to the whole of Scottish society including government, businesses, communities and individuals. It gives

a detailed overview of the changes members say are now essential.

"If we fail to act now," the Assembly warns, *"we will fail our current and future generations, in Scotland and across the world".*

The Assembly's report sets out 16 goals to tackle the climate emergency and reducing carbon emissions, covering wider ranging issues such as domestic heating, emissions, land use, taxation and the economy.

Recognising that the public must be fully involved in the transition to a net-zero society, the Scottish Government also launched in December 2020 a draft Public Engagement Strategy for Climate Change for consultation until end of March 2021 - primarily with people and organisations involved in public communications and engagement around climate change. The draft strategy sets out three key areas for public engagement with a place-based focussed:

- communicating climate change policy
- enabling public participation in policy design
- encouraging action, with a focus on climate literacy and community-led action

The ACT Now plan already embraces the above approach but once the final strategy is available we will review and amend our plans as appropriate.

3. North Lanarkshire Climate Action (Also see Annexe One)

3.1 North Lanarkshire Council

3.1.1   In June 2019, North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) declared a climate emergency. In May 2020, a paper – Response to Declaring a Climate Emergency - was presented to NLC's Environment and Transport Committee at which it was agreed to:

- set a target for the council to reach net-zero by 2030

- update its carbon reduction management plan, which is part of its overall environment policy

- development an Energy Policy for the corporate estate

- approve the development of an adaptation plan for the council

- approve the consultation with stakeholders on the development of a strategic approach to emissions

3.1.2   NLC also supports a range of environmental measures to protect the environment and promote biodiversity, which will contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as other environmental and wellbeing outcomes.

3.1.3   Schools in North Lanarkshire teach children and young people about environmental and climate issues, supported by guidance from Education Scotland. North Lanarkshire schools are also fully involved in the Eco-schools Scotland-wide scheme run by Keep Scotland Beautiful, with many receiving recognition through the "Green Flag Award".

3.1.4   The NL Youth Work Interim Recovery and Renewal Plan 2020-22 also includes a commitment to work with young people to raise awareness and support engagement on environmental issues, including climate issues.

3.2 NHS Lanarkshire

NHS Lanarkshire supports reduction in carbon emissions related to its activities supported by its own carbon reduction management plan, which is part of its Corporate Sustainability Policy.

The NHS Lanarkshire Director of Public Health's 2018-19 Annual Report featured climate emergency, stating it was the "biggest threat to human health" and summarised key actions necessary to address climate change, focussing on measures to reduce carbon emissions through housing, transport, food and product consumption.

NHS Lanarkshire's public health and health improvement workforce also contribute to low-carbon living through initiatives which support active and green health, such as walking and cycling and nature-based leisure activities.

3.3 Police Scotland and Scottish Fire And Rescue

Both Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue are also supporting transition net-zero through carbon management planning Scotland-wide and within their regional divisions, including Lanarkshire.

3.4 Further and Higher Education

Further and Higher education institutions in Scotland are required to contribute to net-zero under the Scottish climate change legislation and the majority have signed the Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland. University of West of Scotland sets out its sustainability and carbon reduction plan on its website and also has a long-standing partnership with Oxfam UK to support its contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

New College Lanarkshire has its own carbon management reduction plan and reports on its contribution to climate action as part of its outcome agreement with the Scottish Funding Council for Further and Higher Education and as a member of Sustainable Scotland Network.

3.5 NL Business Sector

As a major contributor to carbon emissions, the business sector is also a key part of any net-zero transition. Some North Lanarkshire-based business organisations are already making good progress with others needing guidance and support.

3.6 NL Community and Voluntary Sector and Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire

The community and voluntary sector (CVS) is already making a contribution to netzero – but needs support to achieve more. CVS organisations (CVSOs) will be supported by Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL) and members of the North Lanarkshire CVS Climate Emergency Network (1) to:

- review and adapt their organisational activities to reduce their organisation's carbon emissions
- support wider community and citizen engagement and action to reduce carbon emissions to support transition to "low-carbon living"

VANL continues to seek funding to support the above climate action work and its wider role as lead organisation on ACT Now for the North Lanarkshire Partnership.

(1) VANL hosted a first NL CVS seminar on the climate emergency in August 2019, at which it was agreed that a new North Lanarkshire CVS Climate Emergency Network would be established to support CVS action on climate change. VANL now convenes and supports this network. VANL is also an (associate) member of the Scottish Communities Climate Action Network (SCCAN) on behalf of the Climate Emergency Network.

Annexe One: Key Plans and Strategies Supporting Inclusive and Green Recovery and Delivery of ACT Now in North Lanarkshire

1. NLP Partner Organisations

1.1 North Lanarkshire Council

- Working with Communities Framework and supporting arrangements
- Environment Strategy which includes carbon management plan; bio-diversity plan; open space plan; transport strategy; and cycling and walking strategy
- Economic Recovery Plan and Tackling Poverty Strategy to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Local Development Plan, which sets out how land in North Lanarkshire is used for housing, industrial and other purposes and the linked Local Housing Strategy and the Place the Vision Plans to regenerate the area's nine towns
- Interim Youth Work Strategy
- Food and nutrition policy and linked Food Growing Strategy to support greater food resilience for local communities
- Physical Activity Strategy

1.2 NHS Lanarkshire

- Corporate Sustainability Policy

1.3 Scottish Fire and Rescue

- Climate Change Response Plan 2045
- Energy and Carbon Strategy 2020-2030
- Environmental Policy 2020-2025

1.4 Police Scotland

- Carbon Management Plan

1.5 Community and Voluntary Sector, including Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire

1.5.1 North Lanarkshire Community and Voluntary Sector Strategy 2021-24 – forthcoming summer 2021

1.5.2 Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire Strategic Plan 2021-24 – forthcoming summer 2021