

## **Climate Change Update**

### **Summary and Recommendations**

This paper updates the Board on the announcement made by Scottish Government on 18 April to set a new, revised pathway to the 2045 climate change target.

- i. Discuss the announcement made by Scottish Government on 18 April on climate change; and
- ii. Note we had been preparing to seek Leaders' agreement on the climate delivery framework, but this will now be considered at a future meeting.

### **References**

Previous relevant reports include:

- Leader August 2022 – The Climate Emergency
- Environment and Economy Board October 2022 – Climate Change
- Environment and Economy Board December 2022 – Climate Intelligence Service
- Environment and Economy Board March 2023 - Just Transition to a Net Zero Economy
- Leaders May 2023 - Climate Intelligence Service
- Environment and Economy Board September 2023 – Climate Change Delivery
- Environment and Economy Board November 2023 – Climate Change Verbal Update
- Environment and Economy Board December 2023 - Net Zero Delivery Framework and Environmental Standards Scotland Report
- Environment and Economy Board March 2024 - Climate Change - national adaptation plan 2024 to 2029 presentation

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## Climate Change Update

### **Purpose**

1. This paper updates the Board on the announcement made by Scottish Government on 18 April on climate change targets and the implication of this for COSLA's work on climate change.

### **Current COSLA Position**

2. COSLA has a strong position on Climate Change which is in line with scientific evidence and international agreements. While COSLA and Local Government are fully committed to tackling the climate crisis, there was growing concern over the pace of delivery. Multiple reports, including those by the Climate Change Committee (CCC), the Scottish Parliament's Net Zero Energy and Transport (NZET) Committee, and Climate Emergency Response Group (CERG), have indicated that Scotland was not on track to meet its 2030 statutory climate change target.

### **What is Changing?**

3. In March 2024 the Climate Change Committee published its more recent assessment <sup>1</sup>of Scotland's progress on climate mitigation. This report stated that Scotland was failing to achieve its ambitious climate goals and that the acceleration required in emissions reduction to meet the 2030 target was now beyond what is credible.
4. This report – and the confirmation that, in the view of the Climate Change Committee, the 2030 target of a 75% reduction in emissions from the 1990 baseline was now unachievable - led Scottish Government to announce on 18 April that it will be proposing legislation to set a revised pathway to the 2045 net zero target, removing the 2030 target.
5. The Scottish Government also made a policy announcement<sup>2</sup> which covered a number of areas relevant to Local Government, including:
  - The publication of the route map for the commitment to reducing car kilometres by 20% by 2030.
  - An expansion in electric vehicle charge points.
  - A commitment to work with business on the transition away from petrol and diesel vans.
  - The exploration of a new national integrated ticketing system for public transport in Scotland.
  - The acceleration of peatland restoration.
  - A consultation on carbon land tax on the largest estates.

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<sup>1</sup> [Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland – 2023 report to Parliament](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Stepping up action to net zero - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

6. The Scottish Government has committed to bring new legislation to Parliament quickly. In the statement the Government said that the Bill would be narrowly drawn and would retain the legal commitment to the 2045 target while introducing a target approach based on five-yearly carbon budgets.
7. This announcement came as a surprise as we were preparing to seek Leaders' agreement on the climate delivery framework, which is the joint Local and Scottish Government proposal to more effectively oversee the delivery of climate policy and the net zero transition. A paper on the framework was to be considered by Leaders on 26 April but will now be delayed until we can better understand the full implications of the recent announcement. It is hoped that this delay will be minimal and we will be able consider it again at an upcoming Leaders' meeting.
8. As this report was being finalised the news broke about the end of the Bute House Agreement. We do not know what impact this will have on matters discussed in this report, but the discussion at the Board will help us prepare for what comes next.

### **COSLA Position**

9. This paper does not propose, at this stage, that COSLA changes its position on climate change. We propose to listen to the Board's views on the announcement made by the Scottish Government, which will allow us to prepare for what happens next. We would expect a further paper at the June Board.

### **Next Steps**

10. We continue to work closely with Scottish Government and our partners. Officer meetings on the climate delivery framework are continuing and SOLACE will be discussing net zero policy at a meeting on 16 May. The Spokesperson will also meet the Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Net Zero and Energy on 22 May to discuss climate policy. We hope to report to Leaders on the climate delivery framework as quickly as possible, with our aim to do this before the summer recess.