

Executive briefing

December 2017

Supporting public sector climate action



“Ambition to tackle climate change is at the heart of the Scottish Government’s aim to create a growing, sustainable and inclusive economy. There is increasing recognition that taking action can provide wide economic and social benefits, such as new jobs, improved air quality, and positive health outcomes.” **Scottish Government Climate Change Bill Consultation 2017**

Scotland has ambitious emissions reductions targets. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places duties on public bodies to act on climate change. Major public sector bodies are now required to report annually on their climate change action.

The Scottish Government supports the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) as the national network for public sector action on climate change. Managed and developed by **Keep Scotland Beautiful**, and with members in all relevant organisations, SSN supports public bodies to meet their climate change duties and demonstrate climate change leadership.

Supporting climate change reporting

SSN coordinates the annual mandatory Climate Change Reporting scheme for public bodies which details organisations’ climate change action and governance. Standardised reporting is central to public bodies optimising climate change action. SSN provides guidance and training to public bodies on reporting and performance improvement. The deadline for annual reports is 30 November 2017.

Climate Change Reports analysis

SSN analyses all Climate Change Reports, and will publish a high-level analysis in early February 2018.

Case studies and resources

SSN provides case studies and resources to help share and inform good practice. This includes provision of the Carbon Footprint and Project Register Tool and support in using the ISM behaviours framework, developed by the Scottish Government to improve delivery of climate change projects.

Sector engagement

A series of SSN member events will run from February-May 2018 to: highlight key findings from Climate Change Reports analysis; identify and share good practice; make recommendations to improve public sector climate change action and reporting; and provide updates on climate change policy developments.

SSN news

SSN’s fortnightly newsletter shares knowledge of what public sector bodies are doing to address climate change and provides climate change policy updates.

Policy engagement

SSN works with the Scottish Government to promote awareness, understanding and action across the public sector on the Scottish Climate Change Plan. This plan will provide the national policy route-map for delivering on Scotland’s emissions targets to 2032 and is due for publication in February 2018.

Further information is provided in the SSN newsletter and member updates. To discuss how your organisation can make better use of SSN support, please contact ssn@keepscotlandbeautiful.org or visit www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/ssn



Conference Key Messages

On 5 October 2017, **147 delegates from 61 public sector organisations** attended the SSN annual conference. Speakers included Chris Stark, Director of Energy and Climate Change from the Scottish Government, Professor Jan Webb from the University of Edinburgh and a range of leading professionals from across the public sector.

Messages from the conference included:

Energy is “the golden thread” that connects economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability.

The **scale of the challenge** set by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 is ambitious. It will require improving energy efficiency across the built environment, reducing waste heat especially and supplementing low carbon electricity grid supply with a mobile energy storage system in the form of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure. **Public sector emissions need to be near zero by 2032.**

Climate change and energy are being **mainstreamed** into all public sector agendas. **Public sector leadership and collaboration** is vital to achieve Scotland’s legally binding climate change targets. Local authorities are called on as brokers and intermediaries but many suffer from lack of mandate/core resources and capacity.

The scale of the decarbonisation challenge needs to be met with **positive engagement**, recognising the public benefits and economic development opportunities that this offers.

Tackling inequality is a key aspect of getting climate change planning right.

Tackling climate change will directly benefit people’s **quality of life** and contribute to achieving social justice outcomes. Scotland has already undertaken many of the easy - if painful - measures to reduce emissions. We need **ambition, innovation and collaboration** to achieve the changes now needed to meet national targets. Promotion and adoption of low carbon behaviours and influencing decision-making will be important.

Local and locally-owned climate change and energy plans could help improve implementation of Scotland’s Climate Change Plan. These could improve public engagement and act as local investment portfolios for economic development. The new Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies could provide the key vehicle for developing these local plans. Scotland’s local authorities have a core role, with some already developing local plans through their commitment to the EU Covenant of Mayors and the development of Sustainable Energy Action Plans.

Find out more about the SSN Conference website at www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/ssnconference