



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

# **Sustainable Development**

**19 May 2022**

**Reference: SPCB (2022) Paper 38**

## **Executive summary**

1. At its 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021 meeting, the SPCB had the opportunity to consider the Sustainable Development and Climate Change plans for session 6. It agreed to revisit the plans at a later meeting given the significant changes that would be required.

2. This paper takes note of the SPCB's feedback from the previous meeting and provides an update and next steps.

3. There are no decisions required from this paper.

## **Update**

### **The Sustainable Development and Climate Change Plan**

4. The Parliament's work on sustainable development and climate change is driven, at least in part, by the statutory public duties placed upon it, including under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019.

5. The Sustainable Development and Climate Change Plan is underpinned by three interconnected pillars;

- a. Climate Change;
- b. Parliamentary Scrutiny; and,

- c. Engagement and Embedding Sustainable Development thinking (engagement and embedding are now combined into one pillar).

6. The first two pillars represent two key aspects of the organisation. The Climate Change pillar is concerned with how the parliament reduces its environmental impact from its operations. The Scrutiny pillar considers at how we can improve scrutiny, legislation and budgetary oversight using the lens of sustainable development.

7. Pillar 3 is necessary to the delivery of both pillars 1 and 2. It looks at how the Parliament seeks best practice and collaboration with external organisations and looks internally at how the whole organisation can build sustainable development thinking into its decision making.

### **Pillar 1 – Climate Change**

8. The Climate Change and operations pillar is concerned with how the organisation reduces its environmental impact from its operations.

9. The Climate Change (Emission Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, places a legal duty on the SPCB to achieve Net Zero no later than 2045. The SPCB will recall at its meeting in October 2021, that this will involve significant investment in our infrastructure, including upgrading our heating, cooling, thermal performance and electrical systems. It will also require some behavioural changes, including reducing our emissions from travel.

10. At the October 2021 meeting, it was proposed that SPCB set a challenging target of Net Zero by 2030. This was an acknowledgement that the science is becoming ever clearer about the imperatives for action, and the public sector in Scotland has been asked to show leadership in this area – with 2030 the date many are striving for – including the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

11. At the SPCB's meeting in June 2022, we will bring a detailed paper of the investments required to achieve Net Zero. This will be followed by a budget update at the August Planning Day detailing how these investments will be met from existing budgets.

12. Reflecting on previous discussions, it is our recommendation that we defer deciding on a date for achieving Net Zero until SPCB has had the opportunity to assure itself that the funding and change required are achievable within the timescales.

13. Although we have not set a target for Net Zero (ahead of the 2045 requirement), we do still need to set an interim target of the carbon reductions we will achieve this session. This target is a 66% reduction against the 2005 baseline by 2026 and was agreed by SPCB at the October 2021 meeting.

14. The updates on the work of this pillar are as follows;

- We commissioned and received a Net Zero Carbon Report exploring how the building moves away from using gas as an energy source to reach Net Zero
- Climate Change Adaptation risk assessment and action plan developed in conjunction with Adaptation Scotland with support from a Bright Green Business Placement
- Circular Economy work undertaken to identify opportunities for the Parliament to adopt a more circular economy approach when deciding to purchase goods and services
- Supplier Sustainability Event held focusing on the 3 topics of Net Zero, Circular Economy and Community Benefits. The event helped to enhance the knowledge of Parliament Contract Managers on these topics and also encourage and inspire suppliers to embed sustainability initiatives into their services to the Parliament.
- Revised Biodiversity Statement published by the Presiding Officer on 6th April
- Scottish Parliament has become a signatory to 'Edinburgh Climate Compact'.
- Sustainable Development Impact Assessment deployed on various operational topics such as New Ways of Working Project, business travel emissions and the printing service.

## **Pillar 2 – Parliamentary Scrutiny**

15. The second pillar, Scrutiny, considers how to support Members in using a sustainable development lens when scrutinising policy, legislation and spending proposals. The pathway being developed under this pillar is also delivering against the Conveners Group decision for climate change and net zero to be considered as truly cross cutting committee issues. The objectives are;

- Deliver a plan to enhance policy scrutiny and law using a 'sustainable development lens' with particular emphasis on embedding our own sustainable development scrutiny tool;
- Working with parliamentary committees to develop opportunities for SPICe and clerking to support effective climate and sustainable development scrutiny; and,
- Agree capacity building approach to upskill staff and members to ensure effective scrutiny using lens of sustainable development.

16. The updates on the work of this pillar are as follows;

## **COP26**

- COP26, successful delivery of events on the global stage in November 2021 – including an International Legislators’ Summit at the Scottish Parliament (in partnership with Globe International – including keynotes from Vice President Al Gore, the ex-president of the Maldives and many others), and events in the Scottish Government Action Zone, and in the accreditation only Blue Zone area of COP26 in Glasgow.
- COP26 saw our own Sustainable Development Impact Assessment Tool (SDIA) shared on the world stage – with interest from the UN and others in our approach. These events allowed us to engage with important international partners and form relationships with organisations including the Nordic Council, International Institute for Sustainable Development and Kenyan and Brazilian Parliaments – this related to sharing our learning.
- Work through this pillar directly delivered opportunities for a wide variety of members to take part in the accreditation only parts of COP26 – work with the UK Cabinet Office and other legislatures, as well as Globe International delivered accreditation for the Presiding Officer, Committee Conveners, party leaders and the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee.
- Continue to work with International Relations Office on strategic engagement with Nordic Council following on from our partnership work delivering an event in the COP26 Blue Zone.

## **Committees**

- Engaged with Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee to support structures for enhanced climate change and sustainable development scrutiny. NZET Committee Members participated in SDIA Tool session on 3 May, on Ferries Inquiry – this was a key milestone as, although NGBU has used the tool extensively, this was the first time a committee has used the tool. Feedback and lessons learned to improve future sessions.
- Secured NZET Committee agreement for climate change and net zero committee adviser
- Sustainable Development Advisory Group set up to meet monthly to support Scrutiny Pillar pathway development and rollout
- Started work with legislation team on better scrutiny of policy memoranda to bills – especially on sustainable development, human rights, equalities and islands, plus financial memoranda (ongoing).

## **Conveners Group**

- Engaged with Conveners Group on 27 April as part of scope and evidence gathering work for scrutiny pathway -session focused on how we can help Conveners, and CG, deliver on their aspiration for climate change and net zero to be considered cross-committee – and how this sits in the wider context of sustainable development – how we can live within environmental limits, with a strong healthy and just society – underpinned by a sustainable economy, sound science and good governance.
- Follow up Conveners Group session planned for 25 May, to further discuss how we improve scrutiny and to present options/solutions, potentially including policies/procedures, Standing Orders, policy support requirements, training requirements.

### **Sustainable Development Assessment Tool - Scrutiny**

- Sustainable Development Assessment Tool (SDIA) training of facilitators completed and final version (V.3) of tool now approved.
- Created SDIA tool website - design and content currently being peer reviewed by webteam staff as per legislative requirements.
- Delivered a presentation and training to Georgian Parliament related to use of SDIA Tool for post legislative scrutiny of climate and sustainable development law (2 half days, online, through Westminster Foundation for Democracy, building on input from Graeme Cook (SPICe) to WFD guide for parliamentary practice.

## **Pillar 3 – Engagement and Embedding Sustainable Development Thinking**

17. This pillar will link to the delivery of both pillars 1 and 2 and the overall programme mission itself. It will consider external engagement and embedding Sustainable Development thinking throughout the organisation and will ensure the Parliament seeks best practice and collaboration with external organisations around sustainable development thinking whilst embedding it internally, ensuring the whole organisation can build interrogated thinking into its decision making, whether that be for parliamentary scrutiny or operational matters.

18. The updates on the work of this pillar are as follows;

- Expansion of facilitates to use Sustainable Development Impact Assessment Tool across the parliament not just in scrutiny work.
- Use of SDIA tool by Leadership Group as part of Session 6 Strategy.
- Training and Engagement Plan developed for all Parliamentary staff; and,
- Royal Scottish Geographical Society Climate Solutions Accelerator Training offered to all Members, staff and Parliamentary staff - and an enhanced Climate Solutions Professional Training offered to SPS

leaders. These training sessions are recommended within Scottish Government guidance on climate leadership for Public Sector organisations.

## **Strategic Investment Plan**

19. Facilities' Management Office are preparing a paper, in June 2022, to inform and allow the SPCB to make some significant investment decisions during Session 6 to deliver the Sustainable Development Plan.

20. As the Parliament works to reduce emissions, there are several significant building system replacement or enhancement projects to enable removal of gas use for energy. The Parliament will be required to undertake a series of enabling projects during Session 6, ahead of the delivery phase, to replace and enhance building systems, during Session 7. A paper on the Strategic Investment Plan will introduce SPCB to:

- why investment is required;
- highlight drivers for decision making;
- quantify scale of works required to achieve net zero; and,
- set out number of investment projects.

## **Governance**

21. The programme has a Programme Board, headed by Lynsey Hamill, meets quarterly to review and take decisions on programme related issues and plans. The Board engages with SPCB, LG and SRB as decisions and updates are required.

## **Resource implications**

22. The costs for the Climate Change and Sustainable Development Plan are part of the medium- and long-term planning process with SRB.

## **Publication Scheme**

23. This paper can be published.

## **Next steps**

24. An additional paper will be brought to SPCB over the summer setting out:

- the Strategic Investment Plan options in how the organisation can prioritise significant investments to reach Net Zero by no later than 2045.

## **Resilience and Sustainability Group**

19 May 2022