

Can Edinburgh become carbon neutral by 2037?

Edinburgh is setting itself a high bar in trying to become carbon neutral by 2037 and setting an even more ambitious interim target for 2030.

A report to be considered by councillors tomorrow at the Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee outlines a three phased plan for the new approach to sustainability.

This reacts to the council's Climate Emergency motion passed in February and will involve the setting up of a cross party oversight group on sustainability. It also acknowledges the findings of an independent report by Professor Andrew Kerr which showed that the council needed to be more agile to address all the challenges in areas such as climate, transport and planning.

At present the council is committed to reducing emissions by 42% by 2020. Carbon emissions in the city have reduced by over a third since 2005, and the council says it will meet its target by next year.

Projects such as the introduction of a Low Emission Zone and also the extension of the tramline to Newhaven are viewed as positives which will reduce emissions further. But the council also recognises that it will be important to engage with the public about these new targets.

Some of the ways in which they hope to achieve the goal is by employing measures such as increasing local renewable energy generation on council land and property, and developing low carbon supply chains and a low carbon workforce.



Council Leader Adam McVey

Council Leader Adam McVey, speaking ahead of the meeting tomorrow, said: “Cities and towns all over the world are recognising the horrifying scale of the climate change challenge facing us all. We have to act and act fast – and that is why this council and indeed the Scottish Government are not shying away from recognising the state of affairs as a Climate Emergency. We are proposing an ambitious target, to be a Zero-carbon Capital by 2030 and certainly no later than 2037.

“Our task as a whole Council is to work cross party to tackle this together, along with our partner organisations across the city – we owe it to future generations to get this right. It’s a massive and definitely daunting piece of work so it needs a clear direction of travel if we’re to do this properly. I know we can achieve great things if we take an ambitious but realistic approach and I’m looking forward to some constructive and engaging debate about this at the meeting.

“Already we’re making great strides in cutting emissions in the Capital, with our pioneering electric vehicle strategy moving on apace and Friday’s launch of works on the Saughton Park micro-hydro scheme just two examples of our work in this area. Our new monthly Open Streets programme demonstrates how

much calmer, peaceful and pleasant our beautiful Old Town is when people are out at the centre of how space is used. This policy and others like the implementation of low emission zones, show we are truly grasping the climate change nettle at every level.

“One of the most crucial things this Sustainability Approach flags up is that this has to be a citywide effort and that we have to engage our citizens and take them on this journey with us. Their support, innovation and involvement will be absolutely key to whether or not we achieve our goals.”

The [Sustainability Approach report](#) (Item 7.4 on the agenda) will be considered by councillors tomorrow Tuesday 14 May 2019.