



Glasgow City Council

Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring
City Policy Committee

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhoods and
Sustainability

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Item 1

27th May 2025

SUSTAINABLE GLASGOW UPDATE

Purpose of Report:

To update Committee on the Sustainable Glasgow Partnership.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to:

- a) Committee notes the update.
- b) Committee notes the next steps.
- c) Committee requests a further update in 12 months.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides background on the Sustainable Glasgow Partnership, how the partnership has been organised, and updates on the work undertaken since the previous report to this committee in May 2024.
- 1.2 The report also sets out the direction of travel for the partnership and how it intends to support the city's target of being net zero carbon by 2030.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Sustainable Glasgow Partnership was established in 2009 in tandem with production of the Sustainable Glasgow, which was report written by the University of Strathclyde in partnership with Glasgow City Council and through funding supplied by Scottish Government through the Central Energy Efficiency Fund allocated to Glasgow.
- 2.2 The Sustainable Glasgow report established a target for Glasgow to reduce its CO₂ emissions by 30% by 2020 against a baseline of 2006. The report set out 33 actions that, if delivered, were stated to enable this target to be achieved. The report set a cost in excess of £1B.
- 2.3 Amongst the actions set out in the report were recommendations to set up a system to turn sewage and municipal waste into biogas, developing a district heating scheme, introducing efficient natural gas/biogas-fuelled Combined Heat and Power systems and running a smart grid system.
- 2.4 Beyond 2020, Sustainable Glasgow evolved to continue its work in support of Glasgow's Net Zero Carbon by 2030 target.
- 2.5 Figure 1, below, illustrates the progress made against the 2030 target and shows the city to have both achieved and exceeded that target.

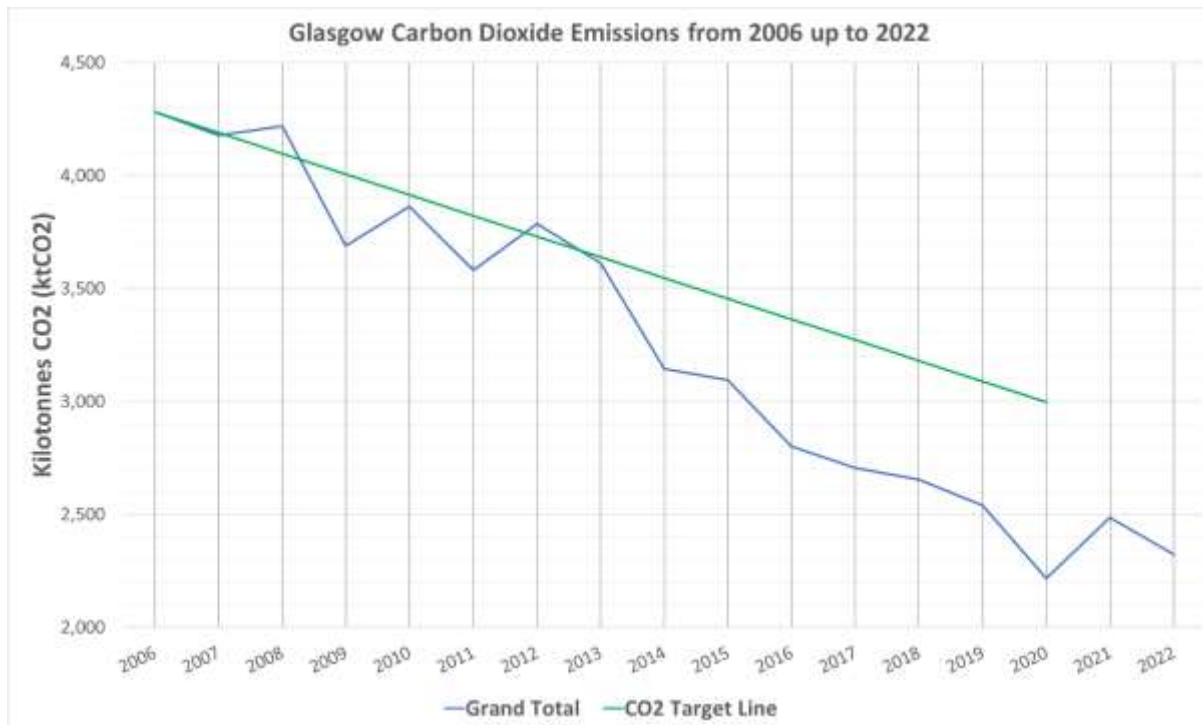


Figure 1 – Glasgow citywide CO₂ emissions

3. Composition of Sustainable Glasgow

- 3.1 At the time the partnership was established, the vision was for a public/private partnership that would drive delivery of the actions set out in the Sustainable Glasgow Plan. The board included Glasgow City Council, and the universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde, NHS, Scottish Government and others as representatives of the public sector, and included Scottish Power, Scottish & Southern Energy, Honeywell, and Siemens, representing the private sector.
- 3.2 The board was reviewed by Legal Services, the outcome of which was to have public sector membership of the group only to support good governance.
- 3.3 In the interim period, a number of significant projects have been delivered that have been supported by Sustainable Glasgow and have contributed to the city reaching its 2030 target.
- 3.4 The Board is supported by four thematic hubs and their chair organisations are listed below:
 - Heating and Housing – Chaired by GCC
 - Green Infrastructure and Transport – Chaired by University of Strathclyde
 - Green Economy and Private Sector – Chaired by Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN)
 - Greening the City – Chaired by Clyde Gateway
- 3.5 Each of the hubs is tasked with working on ways to enhance delivery of action in relation to their specific theme and reporting progress to the board on a quarterly basis.

- 3.6 One of the key pieces of work produced is the Sustainable Glasgow Business Charter. The Sustainable Glasgow Green Economy Hub Charter is a commitment by leading businesses and employers in Scotland's largest city, and host of COP26, to take action within their own organisations and sectors to contribute to a green recovery and radically reduce the City's carbon emissions. The charter commits organisations to "effect significant and demonstrable change in our business practices resulting in an accelerated reduction in climate emissions that contribute to Glasgow's net-zero carbon target".

4. Progress to Date

- 4.1 The Sustainable Glasgow Board has facilitated progress in a number of different areas. This progress can be measured through the work of the thematic hubs as well as through the Board. The work of each Hub is summarised in this section.

4.2 Heating and Housing Hub

- 4.2.1 The Heating and Housing Hub continued its work focusing on how to decarbonize heating and housing through a number of specific focus areas.
- 4.2.2 Work commenced on the assessment of Shared Ground Arrays (SGA) which utilise heat collected from the ground and distribute it through a narrow pipe into homes which each have a small heat pump to increase the temperature. The group invited presentations from technologists in this area and sought to identify opportunities for a pilot project.
- 4.2.3 The Heat Pump Accelerator workstream of the hub invited experts to talk to the group about the cost of deploying heat pumps in domestic properties to facilitate a better understanding on the potential impact of mass individual heat pump deployment on domestic properties. Several opportunities for pathfinders are being explored with Hawthorn Housing Co-operative at Cowlares, Shettleston Housing Association's Old Shettleston Road pre-1919 tenement retrofit properties, the Blackhill On Gas Grid Delivery Area, and Kensa is also independently identifying multi-storey flats with electric heating.
- 4.2.4 GCC Housing Retrofit has now established the Retrofit Advisory Group (RAG) with a core group of circa 40 cross-sector, multi-disciplinary members, and a wider circulation network of 130+ people.
- 4.2.5 The RAG's focus on pre-1919 tenements recognises that tenements represent 25% of the city's housing stock and present technical and logistical challenges by dint of the building age, traditional construction type, conservation status, condition, multiple-ownership, mixed-use and cost. The RAG aims to bring forward clear, comprehensive retrofit guidance for property owners covering both the i) technical specifications for building repair, fabric energy efficiency, renewable energy generation and storage, and clean heat

improvements, and ii) the logistical approach to retrofit including finance and funding, procurement, supply chain and mixed tenure/multiple-owner approaches. The pre-1919 tenement retrofit work is informed by the Housing Retrofit Research Programme established by GCC Housing Retrofit, which is collating existing studies and testing new retrofit approaches whilst also establishing a consistent building energy performance modelling and monitoring method.

4.2.6 Members of the RAG provided advice on PAS 2035 recommendations for cavity fill with external wall insulation systems. Focus then turned to the practicalities of producing guidance outlining retrofit pathways for pre-1919 tenements.

4.2.7 Further effort was dedicated to learning about the ultra-low voltage, far-infrared Electric Wallpaper product. This is a direct electric, clean heating system that is being marketed at hard-to-treat properties and fuel poor households. Presentations were given by the product owner Next Gen Heating. West of Scotland HA outlined the research pilot taking place in Springburn, Glasgow, with partners including Next Gen, Everwarm, Glasgow University and GCC. Wheatley Group gave an update on its deployment of the product on hard-to-treat properties where damp and mould are issues. The research pilot in Glasgow aims to evidence the use and running cost of the system over the winter heating period to determine whether this product provides a credible clean heat pathway for households and properties in the city.

4.2.8 The Hub added district heating to its focus with presentations invited on existing heat networks in the city to allow for exploration of opportunities for additional connections to those network and to explore the challenges preventing network growth.

4.3 Green Infrastructure and Transport Hub

4.3.1 The Green Infrastructure and Transport Hub (GITH) identified three main areas of focus for the 24/25 year. The three areas are listed below:

- Area 1 - To agree information to gather and share about Hub members' (and others) current activity and investment in pursuit of Sustainable Glasgow goals.
- Area 2 - To gather information on key built assets in the city with potential to connect to existing or planned DHNs.
- Area 3 - Transport and travel behaviour change; monitoring and understanding why people aren't using the infrastructure.

4.3.2 In Area 1 & 2, The hub has focused much of its work collating as much information on the assets contained within the city, particularly in LHEES zones to build a dataset that will facilitate the establishment of heat networks. In addition, the hub and officers in GCC have been working to draft a memorandum of understanding for buildings owners to sign to show their commitment to examine connection to heat networks at the appropriate time, thus building confidence for investors. This is connected to the Council's Model for Climate Investment work.

4.3.3 The Hub aimed to convene a workshop / networking meeting targeted at major asset owners, for example all FE & HE institutions, hospitals, ScotRail, the BBC, hotels, and retail owners (such as Enoch Shopping Centre, Buchanan Galleries). The aims are:

- To form a network of estate owners to share information and support each other to progress their own or to connect to a third-party supply of renewable heat.
- To agree what we can do together as major heat off-takers to support the progress of new heat networks across Glasgow.

This event was postponed due to a similar event, the second Feel the Heat event, covered similar ground. The Hub will convene a follow up event to continue the momentum achieved through the Feel the Heat event.

4.3.4 The GITH utilised its membership to provide feedback and advice on the delivery of the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Transport Strategy, as well as considering issues of resilience and adaptation. In addition, the Hub received a presentation on the City's Net Zero Routemap and its members are now considering their role in supporting the actions set out in the 'projected' and 'accelerated' pathways.

4.3.5 The GITH is also looking to provide additional support for both the LHEES and the Council's Climate Investment work and has begun looking at ways in which it can provide support. This includes supporting the potential creation of a letter of intent to collect support from building owners in the City to connect to district heating, going beyond the commitment set out in the Sustainable Glasgow Charter and providing a more specific commitment that could be used to help build investor confidence. The Hub members have been asked to act as early adopters where possible.

4.3.5 In addition to the above, the GITH is also committed to supporting community owned renewables and is working with local community groups to develop approaches in this area and has linked this work to the Council's Community Renewable Energy Framework.

4.3.6 Through the Hub, an opportunity arose to explore the installation of Green Walls on properties on both the University of Strathclyde and Glasgow City Council estates. Feasibility work was undertaken which has provided a viable approach. Both organisations are now pursuing the development of the feasibility work into delivered projects.

4.4 Greening the City Hub

4.4.1 At the start of the year, and to ensure future identified projects and actions are in alignment with the Greening the City Hub Ethos, a review of the Terms of Reference was undertaken by and discussed Hub members. Noting the reference to the GCC Climate Plan within the TOR, a review of the GCC Climate Plan Action Plan actions that most applicable apply to the Greening

the City Hub was undertaken. It was noted that the GCC Climate Plan would be updated and that the Hub would support that review.

- 4.4.2 A Strategic Delivery Plan has been developed to serve as a framework in accelerating the aims of the Hub. Within this, three scales of intervention have been identified, as follows:
1. **Small Scale Interventions**- focused on everyday spaces such as pocket parks and small underutilised public open spaces —projects that are quick to implement and provide immediate, visible benefits.
 2. **Medium Scale Interventions**- targeting neighbourhood-level changes; these initiatives require investments to foster long-term improvements and are primarily executed by public sector partners and the development industry; examples include SUDs, streetscapes, and green roofs.
 3. **Large Scale Interventions**- these are ambitious projects that aim for substantial impact and will be supported by Sustainable Glasgow to achieve transformational outcomes; for example: woodland parks, sites of at least 100 acres.

Across all scales, the planting, cultivation, and management of trees have been identified as fundamental to enhancing biodiversity and environmental resilience, and thus, must be prioritised in all scales.

- 4.4.3 Case studies have been conducted to gather best practice examples for each scale of intervention, as well as the delivery barriers encountered, and the mitigation strategies employed.
- 4.4.4 Using a set of interview questions addressing key lessons, barriers, governance, monitoring, and project scalability, interviews were conducted with industry firms, including Parkly (Helsinki, Finland), Edible Estates (Edinburgh, United Kingdom), New Practice, and Civic Engineers (Glasgow, United Kingdom) from the beginning of the second week of September 2024.

4.5 Green Economy & Private Sector Hub

- 4.5.1 Under its Mobility sub-group, the Hub set up a Mobility event, hosted in the Arnold Clark Innovation Centre. This event was very successful with 75 stakeholders attending from across Scotland. The event provided access to sustainable mobility solutions that support businesses in the delivery of net zero mobility strategies. The conference was also designed to serve as a platform for Hub member organisations to share good practices from their sustainable mobility journey with the conference delegates. Following the success of this event, consideration is being given to hosting further such events on the Hub's other sub-group themes.
- 4.5.2 Through the Hub's sub-group on Skills, work has been underway to connect members of the Hub from academia and business to facilitate opportunities for student placements. Additional work is underway to develop a guide for businesses to aid in skills development in a just transition. Plans for a workshop are being developed to support both of these approaches.

- 4.5.3 As part of the Hubs sub-group on SME sustainability support, proposals are being considered to enhance progress including: making resources more available on the website, updating links to current offerings such as carbon emissions calculators, and hosting an SME specific Green Economy Hub forum to better understand the challenges of the group and assign resources.
- 4.5.4 The Hub's sub-group on Green Infrastructure and Carbon Avoidance has discussed the need for significant carbon sequestration if the City is to achieve net zero Carbon by 2030 as evidenced by the City's Net Zero Routemap. Business in the sub-group have voiced their support for investing in greening of the City and to working with the City to evaluate emissions levels already being abated corporately by businesses through accredited schemes. Meetings have also taken place with organisations who can provide brokerage services in this area.
- 4.5.5 The Green Economy and Private Sector Hub has continued to work businesses throughout the understand the issues faced by businesses of vary size and compositions, and has progressed a number of initiatives, including the continued support of the Sustainable Glasgow Business Charter, which now has almost 40 organisations signed up.

5. Sustainable Glasgow Membership

- 5.1 As was reported in May '24, a review into the effectiveness of the board was undertaken, leading to proposed changes to how the board operates being considered and agreed by the Board. This review was aimed at facilitating more action and delivery related to the work of Sustainable Glasgow, building on the good work that has been done so far and advancing it to the next stage, in support of the Council's various policies and ambitions for the City.
- 5.2 The review concluded that the preferred way to facilitate more action would be to establish a model that required financial contributions from each of the Board members to support the delivery of more action.
- 5.3 A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), drafted by GCC was issued to Board members for signing. Once signed, each signatory was invoiced for three years of membership in year one, as suggested and agreed by the Board members. Following issue of the MoU, a number of organisations decided not to continue participating, leaving eight members on the Board plus one non-executive member. While some attrition was expected, this was slightly above the anticipated level. In anticipation of some level of attrition, a process was established for potential new members to be brought onto the board to support in specific thematic areas.
- 5.4 The expected budget was proposed to be used for the following:
- Programme Management and Support
 - Funding of research/feasibility works for projects.

- Funding of Project Opportunities
- Hosting of an annual Sustainable Glasgow Climate Week
- Creation of promotional materials/management of comms

5.5 The ambition for each of the above bullet points was detailed in the previous report to this committee. Due to the lower level of contribution due to the reduced membership, the workplan has had to be amended accordingly. As the purpose of the changes to the Board was essentially to support more action, it was agreed that the appointment of a Programme Manager was the priority, with works to continue in the other areas where possible. This has included a continued commitment to supporting Climate Week and creating materials to support Climate Week.

5.6 The post of Sustainable Glasgow Programme Manager was advertised, and a considerable number of applications were received. Following review of applications and interviews of shortlisted applicants, a candidate was selected and offered the position. The successful applicant will join Glasgow City Council Summer 2025.

6. Next Steps

6.1 Once in post, and following confirmation of Glasgow's Mission City status, the Programme Manager will, amongst other duties, begin compiling opportunities to bring funding in to support projects in the City that support the Net Zero Carbon target through the Sustainable Glasgow Partnership.

6.2 Consideration will continue to be given to recruiting new members to the Board based on supporting the thematic areas of the partnership.

6.3 The Hubs will continue to deliver work in support of the LHEES, Climate Plan, Transport Strategy, the Net Zero Routemap, and other relevant strategies

7. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal: There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Personnel: The Sustainable Glasgow Partnership is supported by staff from across the membership as well as GCC staff funded by the partnership.

Procurement: There are no direct procurement implications arising from this report.

Council Strategic Plan: The Partnership supports the following Grand Challenges:

Grand Challenge 2 Mission 2: Support the growth of an innovative, resilient and net zero carbon economy.

Grand Challenge 3 Mission 1: Deliver sustainable transport and travel aligned with the city region

Grand Challenge 3 Mission 2: Become a net zero carbon city by 2030

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.

The Sustainable Glasgow Partnership supports how the Council develops its approach to enabling a just transition.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

Positive impact

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

Not directly but through the delivery of net zero projects people experiencing socio economic disadvantage will be supported. The Sustainable Glasgow Partnership also supports how the Council approaches the funding required to achieve net zero.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

The Sustainable Glasgow Partnership supports a wide range of actions within Glasgow's Climate Plan including the ambition of net zero carbon by 2030.

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

The Sustainable Glasgow Partnership supports a wide range of projects that help reduce the impact from climate and mitigate against the impacts the city is already experiencing.

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

The Sustainable Glasgow Partnership supports Glasgow's ambition of net zero carbon by 2030.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
Y/N

If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

8 Recommendations

8.1 The Committee is asked to:

- 1) Note the contents of this report;
- 2) Note that further updates will be provided in Summer 2026.