



Title: **NatureScot Net Zero Plan**

Date: **03 February 2021**

Purpose:	This paper is for Decision .
How does this link with our corporate priorities of improving biodiversity or delivering nature-based solutions to climate change	<p>Our Corporate plan sets out our vision for Scotland's nature and landscapes and is built around four outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More people across Scotland are enjoying and benefiting from nature. 2. The health and resilience of Scotland's nature is improved. 3. There is more investment in Scotland's natural capital and its management to improve prosperity and wellbeing. 4. We have transformed how we work. <p>This Net Zero plan connects with all of these. Our ambition is to be an organisation that inspires action for the natural world and will help Scotland build back better. Working in collaboration, and viewing nature as part of wider social and economic challenges and opportunities is central to our approach.</p>
Summary:	Over the summer colleagues, supported by the Climate Change Programme Board, have drafted and tested our first Net Zero plan. SLT have approved it. For the first time, this presents our target date, which will be a mandatory responsibility under legislation requiring public bodies to set a date for reaching net-zero. This cover paper indicates where we plan to focus immediate effort. It is important that Board and all of our teams are aware of our ambition and actions – expressed in para 12.
Actions	We are aiming to publish 2 versions of our plan as soon as possible to show leadership and support of the Scottish Government target and their climate change plan. Full Net Zero plan will be aimed at internal / staff use while a short Net Zero statement will be aimed at external / public use. We will explore new ways to discuss the implications of this plan to embed the recommended approaches to support the stated intentions.
Recommendations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the target date and ambitious stretch target • Approve Net Zero statement (Annex 1)
Report Author(s): Sponsor:	Ivana Curuvija – Net Zero Officer Stuart MacQuarrie - Deputy Director Business Services & Transformation
Appendices:	ANNEX 1 – Net Zero statement

Purpose

1. Our first Net Zero plan was drafted during Q2, it was reviewed and approved by the Climate change Programme Board in October and SLT in December. This paper presents our first Net Zero Plan summarised in a public statement (Annex 1) for endorsement before publishing internally and externally. We aim to have 2 versions: full plan for staff and the short public facing statement. The fuller operational plan, approved by Senior Leadership Team guides teams towards implementation. It is available on request.

Background

2. Scottish Government declared a climate emergency in 2019, and its Programme for Government announced an ambitious plan to become net zero by 2045. The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham wrote to all Public Bodies asking for their support and NatureScot responded by committing to a target date of 2040, 5 years earlier than the Scottish Government Target. Scotland's public sector bodies have a strong leadership role in delivering the transition to net zero. Strengthened legislation requires public bodies to report on their targets for achieving zero direct emissions and reducing indirect emissions.
3. We also have an ambitious stretch target of 2035 for zero direct emissions (known as 'Scope 1'). We recognise we will need to undergo significant transformation over the next 15 years to achieve this. Our target for fleet decarbonisation is 2025, in line with the Scottish Government phase out.
4. We have outlined how the integrated management of our land and roll out of nature based solutions supports our net zero approach in our plan. This work, as well as carbon accounting for our land, will be developed through the leadership of the Climate Change Programme Board.
5. Our Net Zero plan will be continuously reviewed to adapt and support any changes to targets or legislation but also to support societal changes such as: new technology, innovation, funding and grid decarbonisation.
6. The Climate Change Committee scenario for net-zero has all sectors at zero, or virtually zero emissions, except for agriculture, some parts of industry, and international aviation. Remaining emissions from these sectors will need to be balanced, or outweighed, by negative emissions solutions such as tree planting and bioenergy with carbon capture and storage. The balance between remaining emissions and negative emissions needs to be across the whole economy, and the Scottish Government is committed to achieving this without the use of international offset credits.

What is Net Zero?

7. Net zero is the balance between the amount of greenhouse gas produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. Emissions are separated into Scopes 1, 2 and 3. Scope 1 are direct emissions – gas, oil, fuel for cars, Scope 2 is grid electricity – we don't have control over this and Scope 3 is indirect emissions – procurement, travel, grey fleet. Our target dates refer to absolute zero for (Scope 1) direct emissions – from our buildings and fleet, and a net zero target for indirect emissions, including management of our land. The choices we make about how we operate have significant influence over our indirect emissions which we should reduce as much as we can, accepting it will never be zero.
8. Once we have reduced our emissions as far as possible, we will revisit our plan and consider other mechanisms available to us such as offsetting.

Target dates and Actions

9. If we take 2020 as our baseline year and our stretch target 2035 we have to reduce by 7% (or 63.3 tonnes of CO₂ each year). The target of achieving net zero by 2040 would require us to reduce 5% each year. A more ambitious stretch target would require significant additional financial resource, staff time and radical change to our office portfolio. As a national agency, we have to be mindful of keeping our dispersed presence and we do not have an option of shifting our entire workforce to home working. In addition, we are mindful of not moving our carbon production from office buildings to domestic properties.
10. Our emissions for 2019/20 totalled 950 TCO₂. This was an 11.5% reduction compared to the previous financial year. We are using 2020 year as a baseline for our Net Zero plan for ease of monitoring our progress.
11. Buildings account for the majority of our operational emissions with 66%, Waste and Water take up 2%, Corporate Travel 28% and Helicopter use for Survey work accounts for around 4%. Our immediate focus will be on our buildings, bringing these to zero emissions, followed by travel.
12. We have listed below a summary of the key areas we will be progressing during to meet our ambitious targets.

Scope 1 – direct emissions

- a) Maximising the net zero contribution of our estate portfolio. Investing in renewables, uptake of zero emissions heat solutions, hydrogen and heat networks.
- b) Replacing our petrol and diesel car & van fleet with electric vehicles by 2025. We currently have 22 electric vehicles and 5 plug in hybrids. We are planning to

purchase another 14 EV's this year, which would result in approximately 70% of our cars and vans being fully electric.

- c) Increasing electric vehicle charging points for pool vehicles at 10 of our sites with the capacity to charge 34 vehicles, plus another 26 across 9 sites planned for this year.

Scope 3 – indirect emissions

- d) Introducing a flight management system. Flights will be subject to a 20% annual reduction rate.
- e) Reducing transport emissions by reducing the need to attend meetings which could viably be attended via video conferencing, supported by decarbonisation of public transport and prioritisation of active travel. Consider where our offices are located in relation to existing infrastructure and services.
- f) Testing a tool developed by Zero Waste Scotland measuring impacts of staff home to work travel. This will allow us to see what the daily, quarterly and yearly emissions for commuting are, both in per-capita terms, but also in terms of the entire commuting carbon output. This data will support assessment of other interventions such as working from home or a shorter working week.
- g) Replacement of the use of Helicopters by remote technologies for survey work. If a viable solution is not found through the option remains to make a policy decision to cease use of helicopters.
- h) Influence and improve current procurement systems to have a greater impact on climate change building. We will build on the existing sustainable procurement duties placed on us as a public body through the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.
- i) Improve waste data, focus on circular economy in procurement. Eliminate single use plastic.
- j) Sustainable diet for meetings - catering – SG plan states a target of 20% less meat consumption by 2030, and 35% by 2050.

Buildings and renewables work programme

- 13. Our buildings are where we expect to make the most significant carbon savings so we have provided further insight into how we will progress this agenda.
- 14. In preparation for drafting our net zero plan, we employed a Renewable Energy Consultant to carry out a desktop study and produce a report providing options for our estate to achieve net zero by 2040.
- 15. The study highlighted the need for £550k of SG Grant/Funding of renewable energy required over 10 offices by installing PV, wind, Air Source Heat Pump and replacement of fossil fuel heating systems. If we did everything recommended in the study (which would require considerable investment), it would save us 625 tonnes of CO2 from our buildings. Work is underway to prioritise action and secure funding.

16. Our estate covers a variety of building and property types, some more suited to the adoption of low or zero carbon technologies than others. Some locations present considerable challenges. We do not own all our offices, we share offices with other public bodies and companies and we are not always the landlord so we cannot justify investments. It is unlikely that we can afford the total investment that will be required to deliver Net Zero at all current sites.
17. We anticipate that further development and movement to public sector hubs alongside a reduction in the overall estate will help us reach our target. All Public bodies will have the same aim and similar target dates, which should help us. A significant number of staff have expressed the desire to remain working from home which will reduce home to work travel but also the space required at some locations. It is important to note that we must avoid shifting our emissions from offices to domestic properties. In supporting decision making we must adopt new technologies to allow our staff to make carbon conscious decisions.

Conclusion

18. We can achieve zero direct emissions – Scope 1 by 2035, but not without considerable investment and collective effort by all staff. This will also be helped by Grid decarbonisation, renewables, and reduction of our office space, electrifying our fleet, less travel and changing working practices. As more staff move to home working, we will need to adopt new technologies to account for these emissions sensitive to the varied domestic heating and lighting arrangements.
19. Our priority is to progress work on buildings as these fall into Scope 1 – gas, biomass and heating oil. Further information about available funding, and SG support, will enable us to plan this work better but can progress with prioritising low cost interventions in the meantime. If the grid becomes fully decarbonised this will make a big impact on our emissions but also any emissions from home working. By 2045 the type of heating used in all buildings will be different to the current heating mix. All new buildings from 2021 will use zero emissions heating as stated in the recent SG Climate Change Plan update. Renewables will supply all our heating, lighting and cooling needs.
20. The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed every aspect of our lives. While there are many challenges there are also important opportunities in this time of change. We have demonstrated that we are able to reduce our travel and largely maintain continuity of service. However as restrictions ease, travel emissions will inevitably rise again. We can drive the impact of this down by the planned acceleration of EV adoption by 2025 and reduction in flights, but we need to find ways of maintaining the carbon benefits and rebuild our future ways of working in a more sustainable way.

Recommendations

- Endorse the target date and ambitious stretch target
- Approve Net Zero statement (Annex 1)

Annex 1

NATURESCOT NET ZERO STATEMENT

We are Scotland's nature agency. We work to improve our natural environment in Scotland and inspire everyone to care more about it. So that all nature in Scotland – our key habitats and landscapes, all our green space and our native species – is maintained, enhanced and brings us benefits. It is the job of all of us to achieve a balance in the sensitive management of our natural world in order to maintain and enhance biodiversity.

Working towards Scotland's 'green recovery' from Covid-19, we want to stimulate a revival that secures resilience through a nature-rich future for Scotland and an effective response to the climate emergency. Addressing the Climate Emergency requires action at all levels, from the highest policy to the actions of individuals. In this document we highlight how we will accelerate our action on reducing our corporate emissions.

The changing climate will increasingly affect our ability to deliver our work. We must therefore adapt our ways of working, deal with the climate challenges, and secure the future of our services.

We must eliminate the greenhouse gas emissions that are contributing to the climate emergency. We have already made good progress in reducing our corporate emissions but we must go much further to become net zero by 2035, and thereafter.

The scale of change ahead is nothing short of transformational. This statement presents NatureScot's view of how we can achieve our ambition to be Net Zero by 2035.

'Net Zero' means achieving a balance between the greenhouse gases put into the atmosphere and those taken out. What we do in the next decade to limit emissions will be critical to the future, which is why every country, sector, industry and each one of us must work together to find ways to cut the carbon we produce. To reach Net Zero, all emissions will need to be cut. We consume electricity and gas to deliver our services, run our offices and travel to deliver our work.

We will achieve net zero emissions through reducing our operational emissions and working to decarbonise our estate through developing further renewable energy systems in our offices and on our land. This will be matched by changes in the way we do our business to support reduced travel emissions, building on successful ways of working tested during 2020.

Every part of our organisation has a role to play in us becoming net zero. To achieve Net Zero emissions from our operations by 2035 we will:

- Maximise the net zero contribution of our estate portfolio. We will further invest in renewables, uptake zero emissions heat solutions, hydrogen and heat networks.

- Replace our petrol and diesel car and van fleet with electric vehicles by 2025.
- Install further charging points at our offices and visitor centres.
- Reduce our corporate travel. Our travel hierarchy is firmly focused on prioritising digital communication or public transport however we will do more by reducing our flights by 20% year on year and by reducing the need to attend meetings which could be attended via video conferencing, supported by decarbonisation of public transport and prioritisation of active travel.
- Actively review our suite of office locations to identify office hubs connected to existing infrastructure and services to further reduce travel needs.
- Measure and report the impacts of or staff home to work travel.
- Eliminate the use of Helicopters for survey work.
- Influence and improve current procurement systems to have a greater impact on climate change. We will build on the existing sustainable procurement duties placed on us as a public body through the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.
- Increase our focus on circular economy in procurement and eliminate single use plastic.

NatureScot owns and manages 41,268 hectares of land. Our land stretches across 43 Nature Reserves (including all or part of 29 National Nature Reserves). The scale of it means it holds significant potential for sequestration. In 2019 we published [Climate change commitment](#) statement and in there we state - we will manage our own landholdings as exemplars of ways to measurably enhance carbon storage and sequestration. This will demonstrate best practice that other land managers can follow. We will further develop carbon accounting of our management to monitor progress, and promote the methods to others.

Managing and improving the state of our land will not be used to balance or offset any operational emissions we have. We will invest in these nature-based solutions in parallel with our work towards zero direct emissions (and reduced indirect emissions). Taking this approach, rather than combining the two into a 'net emissions' target, will ensure we maximise effort on all of the ways NatureScot can contribute to Scottish Government's Net Zero target. This approach will also help ensure that our land management for carbon equally targets the crucial co-benefits of adaptation and addressing biodiversity loss.

Climate change is an existential threat to the wellbeing of future generations. Pursuing net zero emissions is not primarily about meeting a target, but rather doing everything possible to minimise the emissions associated with our activities and maximising the positive contribution we can make, irrespective of which party accounts for the emissions.

Going forward we will review our progress and update our Net Zero plan in line with new legislation, changes in the carbon accounting systems, and new technology available.

We will work with our partners and stakeholders to demonstrate positive action as we progress towards net zero emissions. We believe this accountability and transparency is vital.