



## Audit Scotland report: Auditing Climate Change

**Committee**            Audit and Standards

**Date of meeting**    26 November 2021

**Date of report**     2 November 2021

### Report by Acting Chief Executive

#### 1. Object of report

To advise the committee on the issue of an Audit Scotland report titled '*Auditing Climate change*' and outline the key messages and implications for SPT contained therein.

#### 2. Background

In October 2021, Audit Scotland published a report titled '*Auditing Climate Change*'.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that there are record levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The IPCC warned that the world is fast approaching the 1.5 degrees of warming threshold that we must not pass if we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. The UN Secretary-General declared it a 'code red for humanity' and warned that urgent action is required to place the world on the right trajectory. Urgent action is also required to adapt to the impacts of climate change that are now unavoidable. Every country has a role to play.

The Audit Scotland report says Scotland has set a legally binding target of becoming net zero by 2045, five years earlier than the UK and has several interim targets including a 75 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

The Audit Scotland report adds that the public sector in Scotland has a key role to play in ensuring a pathway to net zero by 2045 and adapting to climate change. All public bodies will need to reduce their direct and indirect emissions, and many will also have a role in reducing emissions in wider society. Councils, for example, have a key role in working with communities to help drive forward the required changes in almost all aspects of public and private life, from transport and housing to business support. There are specific legal responsibilities placed on public bodies to contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to adapt to climate change, to act sustainably and to report on progress.

The Audit Scotland report adds that it is not straightforward to identify how much public money is being used to tackle climate change at all levels within the public sector.

The Audit Scotland report can be found at:

<https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/auditing-climate-change-an-update>

### 3. Outline of findings

Audit Scotland report have set out the key themes and challenges, namely:

- Climate ambition vs plans and actions;
- Importance of adaptation;
- Paying for it;
- Critical role of the public;
- Joined up working;
- Public sector leadership role.

Audit Scotland intend to integrate climate change into existing audit work and will:

- pilot integrating climate change considerations into financial annual audit reports and consider how best to incorporate climate change into financial annual audits going forward;
- focus on climate change into relevant performance audits and overviews as appropriate, for example the Local government overview.

#### Response to the Audit Scotland report

SPT is an active Community Partner with all Councils in the Partnership area. SPT is also an active member of Climate Ready Clyde.

Regular Climate Change and Carbon Management reports have and continue to be presented to the Strategy & Programmes committee.

Senior management have recently reviewed and refreshed the Terms of Reference of the internal Climate Change and Carbon Management officer group.

### 4. Conclusions

In October 2021, Audit Scotland published a report titled '*Auditing Climate Change*'.

The Audit Scotland report says Scotland has set a legally binding target of becoming net zero by 2045, five years earlier than the UK and has several interim targets including a 75 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

The Audit Scotland report adds that it is not straightforward to identify how much public money is being used to tackle climate change at all levels within the public sector.

SPT is an active Community Partner with all Councils in the Partnership area. SPT is also an active member of Climate Ready Clyde.

Regular Climate Change and Carbon Management reports have and continue to be presented to the Strategy & Programmes committee.

### 5. Committee action

The committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the Audit Scotland report titled '*Auditing Climate Change*'.

## 6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>None.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>None.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>As detailed in the report.</i>

**Name** Neil Wylie

**Name** Valerie Davidson

**Title** Director of Finance

**Title** Acting Chief Executive

For further information, please contact Iain McNicol, Audit and Assurance Manager, on 0141 333 3195.