

Members' Library Service Request Form

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Document Title	ClimatEvolution Vision and Action Programme: Extension of Consultation Timescales

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REPORT TO: Member's Library Service

MEETING DATE:

BY: Head of Development

SUBJECT: ClimatEvolution Vision and Action Programme:
Extension of Consultation Timescales

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise elected members of the revised consultation period in relation to the consultation draft ClimatEvolution Vision and Action Programme and its associated documents, namely the draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report and draft Habitats Regulation Appraisal. This report also sets out the reasoning for this change, and the new timescale for interested parties to submit their responses in relation to these consultation documents.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That members note that the consultation period for the draft ClimatEvolution Vision and Action Programme and the associated draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report and draft Habitats Regulation Appraisal has been extended until the 30th September 2020.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), once approved by Scottish Ministers, will be the Scottish Government's up-to-date spatial strategy for Scotland. Scottish Ministers have commenced the preparation of NPF4 with a series of early engagement and consultation exercises, such as the 'Call for Ideas' on the content of NPF4 including candidate National Developments. All Call for Ideas responses were to be submitted to the Scottish Government by end of April 2020.
- 3.2 However, on the 29th May 2020 the Scottish Government's Chief Planner advised that the outbreak of Coronavirus has impacted the entire timetable for developing NPF4. Originally, the consultation draft of NPF4 was to be published in September 2020, but it is now scheduled to be published in

September 2021; instead, an Interim Position Statement on NPF4 will be published in autumn 2020 as a basis for further early engagement. Furthermore, the original anticipated 2021 timescale for approving NPF4 has now been re-programmed to 2022. Further updates on the process and timetable for developing NPF4 are also likely to be issued by the Scottish Government in future.

- 3.3 In the context of the original timescales for developing NPF4, on the 25th February 2020, the Council approved an outline of its response to the Scottish Government's 'Call for Ideas' on NPF4. This outline is set out in the report entitled 'Development Planning: National Planning Framework 4 / Regional Spatial Strategy / Local Development Plan' ([here](#)). That report set the context for the Council's NPF4 responses at regional and local levels. Importantly, the outline response noted the significant and nationally important development opportunities within the former coal field area including the Blindwells Development Area, the former Cockenzie Power Station site and including parts of the neighbouring communities and land.
- 3.4 The 25th February 2020 Council decision also provided delegated authority to the Head of Development and Cabinet Spokesperson for Environment to submit the Council's final and full response (based on the previously approved outline for it) to the Scottish Government for consideration in the development of draft NPF4. The Council's full 'Response to National Planning Framework 4 Consultation' was therefore submitted on the 30th April 2020 and it is available for inspection in the Member's Library ([here](#)).
- 3.5 In parallel with the above steps, Council officers are continuing to develop the ClimatEvolution Vision and Action Programme collaboratively with the Scottish Government, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Water, Scottish Natural Heritage and a wide range of other stakeholders. This document is intended to be a high level vision, not a detailed masterplan, which describes and illustrates how the Council's proposed National Development ambition may be planned. The consultation draft ClimatEvoluton document therefore sets out a series of spatial diagrams, proposals and an Action Programme that suggest how that vision may be worked towards over the course of the next 30 years, in 10 year steps. Its primary purpose is to help inform the development of NPF4 and the next Local Development Plan for East Lothian (LDP2).
- 3.6 On Tuesday 26th May 2020, under COVID-19 Emergency Recess Arrangements, the Council approved public consultation on the draft ClimatEvolution Vision and Action Programme (and its associated draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report and draft Habitats Regulation Appraisal). The associated Council report 'Draft ClimatEvolution Vision & Action Plan for Consultation ([here](#))' indicated that the consultation period for these documents would also commence as soon as practicable following approval of the report's recommendations.
- 3.7 The public consultation on the ClimatEvolution package therefore duly commenced on the 1st of June 2020. The Council report of 26th May also

outlined special measures enabled by the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, including publication of consultation material through digital means rather than in hard copy. In recognition of the circumstances around the outbreak of Coronavirus and associated restrictions on movement of the public and physical distancing etc, the 26th May Council report therefore also outlined a range of consultation techniques, including digital ones that could be deployed during the consultation period. One of these was to extend the normal six week consultation period to eight weeks.

- 3.8 The original outline for an eight week consultation period was to ensure that, on one hand, public consultation would be maximised on the Council's National Development proposals, while, on the other hand, that timescale would also ensure that any approved ClimatEvolution document could be used to help inform the development of NPF4 by September 2020.
- 3.9 However, as noted above, the outbreak of Coronavirus has delayed the publication of draft NPF4 until September 2021. In that context, it is therefore appropriate to extend the consultation period on the draft ClimatEvolution Vision and Action Programme documents. This is particularly so given that the Council has already made responses to the NPF4 'Call for Ideas', at both regional and local levels, which are sufficient (at this stage) to inform the Scottish Government's Interim Position Statement on NPF4, which will be published in autumn 2020 to enable further early engagement. An extended consultation timescale on the ClimatEvolution documents would therefore still enable them to feed into the future developmental stages of Draft NPF4.
- 3.10 Taking all of the above together, there is considerable merit in extending the period for consultation on the draft ClimatEvolution Vision and Action Programme (and its associated draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report and draft Habitats Regulation Appraisal). The relevant consultation period has therefore been extended until the 30th September 2020. The necessary updates in relation to this change will be articulated through press release, statutory notice, social media and all other channels as required and as soon as practicable.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy implications arising from this report since the original objectives associated with the consultation period will continue to be achieved under the new consultation timescale. The new consultation timescales will allow for a longer period of awareness raising and engagement, and hopefully therefore also allow same for stakeholders and communities to review the proposals and to respond to them.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - none
6.2 Personnel - none
6.3 Other - none

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Development Planning: National Planning Framework 4/Regional Spatial Strategy/Local Development Plan ([here](#))
7.2 Response to National Planning Framework 4 Consultation ([here](#))
7.3 Draft ClimatEvolution Vision & Action Plan for Consultation ([here](#))

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