

## 13.1 Public Sector Carbon Emissions

<b>Improvement Project Title</b> <b>Carbon Reduction - Green Champions</b>
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<b>Aim statement</b> Reduce public sector carbon emissions by at least 7% by 2023
<b>Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b> <i>"Our environment is integral to the quality of life in the city and is vital to encouraging the wellbeing of its citizens."</i>
<b>Stretch Outcome 13:</b> Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate.
<b>13.1 Key Drivers:</b> Reducing emissions across the city through delivery of Aberdeen's Net Zero Vision & Route map.
<b>Improvement Project Aim:</b> Reduce public sector carbon emissions by at least 7% by 2023
This project charter is also relevant to the related LOIP Improvement Project Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SO 13: Reduce the generation of waste in Aberdeen by 8% by 2023</li><li>• SO 14: Increase % of people who walk as one mode of travel by 10% by 2023, increase % of people who cycle as one mode of travel by 2% by 2023</li><li>• SO 15: Increase the number of community run green spaces by a minimum of 8 that are organised and self-managed for both people and nature by 2023</li></ul> Opportunities for Green Champions may arise that can be linked to partnership working with other LOIP aims through change ideas initiated by themselves.
<b>Link to Locality Plans</b> No community ideas aligned to this project.
<b>Why this is important and issues with the current system?</b> Many energy and climate initiatives are already taking place in public sector organisations in the city. These are mostly focused on strategies, policies, plans and projects for the organisations operations and assets themselves. There tends to be less focus on engaging the wider staff/ community in this sphere. This project aims to plug that gap, by empowering others to design and deliver change outside of their usual scope of work.
Although the revision of the LOIP has broadened the aims/stretch outcomes, public workforce ambassadors are still measurable to promote, encourage and engage low carbon living and working to contribute towards the revised 7% emissions reduction. The development of Champions is a change idea identified under an emission

reduction driver diagram carried out by the Sustainable City Group in February 2020 (Appendix 1).

Green Champions are volunteer led staff schemes in an organisation, that can identify areas of improvement, drive change towards the sustainable and resource efficient behaviour and opportunities that can have the potential for long-term cost and carbon efficiencies. Champions can help to instigate change, provide education, and create a platform of a sustainable culture and practice through engagement, enthusiasm, passion, and motivation.

Though it should be noted that Green Champions can contribute to the wider aim to reduce Aberdeen's emissions through improved understanding to support behaviour change and the testing and implementation of measures to reduce emissions; these changes alone will not be sufficient to meet the city carbon reduction aim. UK emission data sets indicate public sector emissions for Aberdeen as 97 (kt CO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2019. Aberdeen City Council's emissions were 30,563.31 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e for 2019/20.

**Supporting action to meet key drivers** - Green Champions can form part of wider organisation planning on work to address climate change and sustainable topics, this includes:

- Contributing to the LOIP stretch outcome 13, addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's emissions. By reducing public sector carbon emissions by at least 7% by 2023 through and supported by the actions of public sector ambassadors.
- Public Sector Climate Change plans, such as ACC Climate Change Plan.
- The development of a Green Champion scheme can support the public sector with putting in place activities to meet public bodies duties, under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. These require public sector organisations to reduce emissions, adapt to climate change, act sustainably and report annually on progress.

Guidance on putting Public Bodies Climate Duties into practice states: "Public bodies should raise awareness internally and externally on climate change and work towards buy-in from staff at all levels of the organisation, supporting and enabling them in understanding the contribution they can make in addressing climate change."

- The introduction of the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, has set Scottish targets for Net Zero emissions by 2045 and this will require increased action to reduce carbon emissions in the public sector. Taking a community led approach to behavioural change not only empowers individuals but the social influence that can spread across teams, departments, partners across the city contributing towards Net Zero. (5.1 Just Transition commission Report Interim Report, 2020 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/transition-commission-interim-report/pages/10/>).

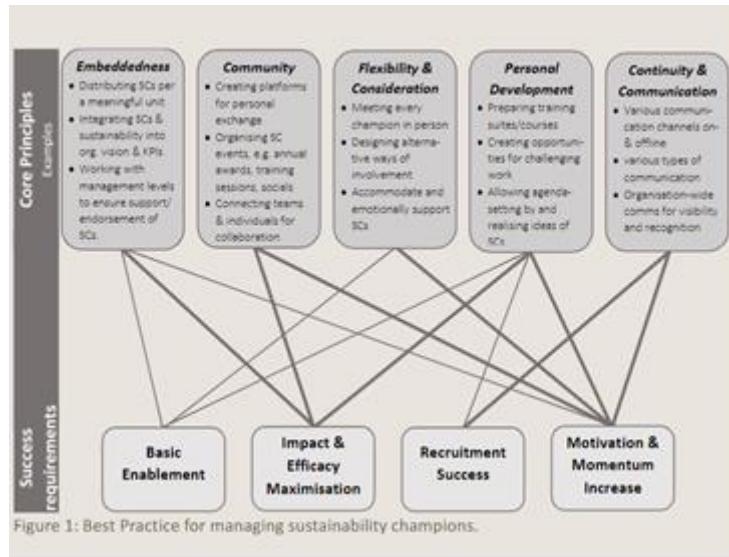
The development of Green Champions aligns with:

- UN Sustainable Development Goal on Climate Action - 13.3, improving education, awareness raising and human institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.
- The [Net Zero Vision for Aberdeen & Strategic Infrastructure Plan](#), and the transition in Aberdeen towards Scottish climate change targets.

Aberdeen City Council approved an Energy and Climate Route map in May 2020 and following this, a Council Climate Change Plan in March 2021 setting a net zero target of 2045 at the latest (alongside interim targets) and putting in place measures to manage climate risks to Council assets and operations. A Project Register supporting the plan includes an action for Increased participation – through a (Green) Champions Network.

### Informing the development of green champions

Aberdeen City Council hosted a 3-month placement project with an MSc student. The project carried out 13 interviews, to learn more about good practice for similar staff sustainability schemes already in place and operating elsewhere in the UK. In addition, it gathered 235 responses from a Council staff survey to learn more about sustainable behaviour, knowledge, and attitudes. The project results were designed around 5 core principles: Basic Enablement; Impact & Efficacy Maximisation; Recruitment Success; Motivation & Momentum increase that contribute towards long term successes.



With these identified principles and the results from interviews and surveys, the following Recommendations were provided:

1. *Strategic Placement of SCs*
2. *Increasing organisational endorsement*
3. *Clear messages and communication*
4. *Designing for progress*
5. *Harnessing resources for development & training*
6. *Establishing internal collaboration*
7. *Drawing on the expertise of a wider network*

The recommended advice aligns with the plans of the Green Champion Scheme and highlights the importance of issues such as support, embedded sustainable endorsements at a management level, external networking, and evolution of Green Champions. Green Champions operate in a range of public and private organisations, as part of the implementation and delivery of Green Champions, tapping into local experienced companies would be advantageous to the growth and delivery of the scheme. Networking and learning opportunities from similar schemes i.e. at Inverdees House (home to Nature Scot, SEPA and JNCC where they have a working scheme in place) can provide partnership and collaborative opportunities.

## Measures

### Outcome measures

- % Reduction in Aberdeen's carbon emissions
  - UK Government – [Emissions of Carbon Dioxide Local Authority Areas](#) (Full data set - Aberdeen).  
2005 – 1,853.7 (Kt CO2e)  
2015 – 1,364 (Kt CO2e)  
2019 – 1,554 (Kt CO2e)  
Per capita emissions (t)  
2005 – 8.9  
2015 – 5.9  
2019 – 5.1
- % Reduction of public sector organisation emissions  
In June 2021 - 2019 public sector data was extracted from these data sets and Public Sector Totals for Aberdeen indicate:
  - 2005 – 139.9 (Kt CO2e)
  - 2015 – 108 (Kt CO2e)
  - 2019 – 97 (Kt CO2e)
- Aberdeen City Council measures [carbon emissions annually](#):
  - 2015/16 - 46,371 tonnes of carbon dioxide (tCO2e)
  - 2019/20 – 30,563.31 (tCO2e)
- % Reduction in waste (proxy measure) – test change
- % Reduction in energy use (proxy measure) – test change

### Process measures

- No. of staff carbon reduction initiatives
- No. of people taking part in environment and sustainability educational activities (wider engagement)
- Outcome of initiatives e.g. reduction in paper use
- No. of public sector workforce ambassadors of low carbon living and working (No. Green Champions signed up)
  - Baseline 2020= 0 participants
  - Target 2021 = 13
  - Target 2022 = 26
  - Target 2023 = 50
- Communication measures (analytics and engagement, including no' accessing online mechanism for information sharing)

Note: There are a number of factors that can influence carbon emissions, e.g. a cold winter will increase energy demand and emissions. There are also other initiatives that will contribute to a reduction in emissions. It can be challenging to disaggregate the outcomes of these and therefore directly attribute reductions to specific interventions. As such, the success of Green Champion schemes may not be fully reflected in overall emissions data alone. Therefore, some proxy measures will be used, e.g. reduction in

waste, energy use, etc which can provide an indication of contribution from Green Champions interventions to the overall emission reduction aim.

### **Change ideas**

#### **Build a city public sector staff Green Champion's network to help contribute towards 7% reduction target of carbon emissions by 2023, through carbon reduction actions and encouraging change.**

Creation and development of a public sector staff Green Champions network, to encourage a more sustainable culture in line with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. Supporting organisation climate plans, such as the Aberdeen City Council Climate Change Plan and targets set by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019.

The Green Champions concept will be developed; learning from similar schemes elsewhere, monitored using outcome and process measures. Successful change ideas will be incorporated into a wider roll out of the network, collaborating and exchanging information with wider city public sector organisations to achieve a common goal of carbon emission reduction in the public sector. Green Champions would lead the following change ideas:

#### **Plan, test, implement and develop a low/no budget, easy to implement programme of carbon reduction initiatives, led by the volunteer Green Champions network. Examples include but are not limited to:**

- Green Champion paper “lite” or plastic free challenge – encourage staff uptake.
- Seek buy in/endorsement of management level support to ensure initiatives are enabled throughout the organisation.
- GC to encourage colleagues to utilise better use of technology to make low carbon choices computers, monitors, emails vs teams etc.
- GC switch off initiatives i.e. computers/ monitors, lights.
- Combining transport options between facilities.
- Encourage uptake of active travel – link with January getting fit resolutions and healthier options (opportunities to look at partnership working)
- Encourage uptake of low carbon travel – promoting local travel initiatives.
- Measure the change, promote the “wins” and roll out/ mainstream successful carbon reduction measures.
- Partnership working with city public sector organisations, particularly within shared facilities.

#### **Through Green Champions develop a staff led awareness programme to support behaviour change, disseminate information, build staff understanding on carbon reduction and encourage action on climate change. Test staff led methods, information and messages to empower wider staff to contribute.**

- Gamification as an approach to encourage uptake of staff carbon reduction behaviour changes.
- Establish an engagement plan for and implement Green Champion communication activities to assist staff understanding of carbon reduction projects and processes already taking place. As well as encourage staff uptake e.g. encourage carbon reducing behaviour changes, linked to national initiatives i.e. Climate Week.
- Identify the support, training and resources available

- Disseminate information to staff, through Green Champions.
- Build on the design and improvement group through increasing creative/design opportunities, external organisations to learn and support from.

**Establish and build network online to enable information sharing, collaboration and building peer to peer connections throughout the organisation as well as out with the organisation.**

- Relationship and team building - instil a Green Champions network of support.
- Build on collaborative and networking opportunities-particularly through other public sector organisations such as the Police, NHS Grampian etc.
- Ensure key support in management roles to provide opportunities for Green Champions to make suggestions and “go with it”.
- Showcasing areas where Green Champions are effective.
- Utilising external resources and volunteering opportunities or projects as part of their development towards achieving particular test aims.
- Combining efforts towards the 7% reduction.

Widening the Improvement Group to increase numbers of Green Champions across public sector partners to help support the LOIP aim of decreasing public sector carbon emissions. A Green Champion Networking Workshop with wider city public sector organisations, will enable showcasing, learning, development and support of carbon reduction behaviours.

The focus is not limited to climate change as the Green Champion network can provide opportunities to encompass wider environmental improvement activities whether in a workplace, or at home.

**Location/Test Group**

Locations will vary depending on the work environment, this will include but not limited to:

- the workplace
- working from home\*
- outdoor work
- multiple work locations

Test Group:

- Individual Green Champions (localised and across the organisation)
- Green Champions working in a team environment within the organisation
- Green Champions working across participating city public sector organisations

\*Working from home is not included in public sector emissions, however with impact of Covid, this year's Carbon Emissions Reporting, “working from home” figures were included.

**Resources**

Using what is available i.e. technology.

**Potential risks and/or barriers to success & actions to address these**

- Lack of successful engagement with the employees / potential champions
- Job roles that cannot implement change
- Lack of senior management support to unlock the changes championed
- Inconsistent support from Champions to help develop and implement initiatives
- Relying on same actions, expecting same results in different departments
- Timing of implementation of Green Champions and their initiatives to ensure support and participation towards change

- Unrealistic goal setting and balance of staff priorities, resources and workloads can reduce effectiveness of Green Champion roles
- Not being able to extract / quantify data / results
- Poor succession planning

#### **Project Team**

- Alison Leslie, Senior Sustainability Officer
- Kat Ramsay, Sustainability Trainee
- The Awareness and Behaviour Change Subgroup of the wider Council Energy and Climate Plan Group, including People and Organisation and Education.
- Sue Lawrence, Nature Scot
- Kris Hultman, Waste and Recycling
- Rob Hopkirk/Debjani Sarkar, NHSG Sustainability Team
- Facilities contact-Lee Taylor/Andy Campbell
- Stephan Jindra, Frazer Ramsay, AUSA Sustainability Coordinator/University of Aberdeen.
- Tara Murray Sustainability and Climate Change Officer, Aberdeenshire Council
- Police-Chief Inspector Dave Patterson

Private Sector representative contacted (tbc)

#### **Community Ideas for Improvement Evaluation/Status**

There were no community ideas for improvement aligned to this project.

#### **Outline Project Plan**

<b>Project Stage</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>Getting Started</b> (Project Score 1-3)	<p><b>Establish a “Green Pioneers” test group.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit/invite Pioneers to develop and plan Green Champions roles.</li> <li>• Training and information workshops.</li> <li>• Test and trial initial carbon reduction initiatives i.e. computer switch offs.</li> <li>• Test gamification methods as an approach for carbon reduction behaviours.</li> <li>• Follow up, feedback and learning opportunities towards improvement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Establish Green Champions Network across the wider organisation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and information workshops.</li> <li>• Run wider scale gamification events across the organisation-themed occasions.</li> <li>• Encourage staff to select and/ or work towards the Green Champion roles of Communication Champion, Improvement Champion and Trainer Champion.</li> <li>• Run initiatives/ actions set by the Champions, monitor, and develop (initiatives set by the Champions). Learning and self-reflection, progress,</li> </ul>	November 2020-2021  2021-2023  2021  2021-23  2021-23

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monitoring, measuring and feedback learning from testing and improving.</li> <li>Share successes and promote across the wider organisation.</li> </ul> <p>Look at collaboration opportunities, networking, and wider scale projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comparison small team testing i.e. NHS-GP, schools, etc</li> <li>Shared buildings with external partners i.e. Police Scotland.</li> </ul>	2021-23
<b>Designing and Testing Changes</b> <i>(Project Score 4-7)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage test ideas within GC for individual and or group testing</li> <li>Test gamification approach partnering with Digital Champions (across the whole organisation)</li> <li>Small team testing with museums and galleries, looking at resources and circular economy after British Art Show</li> <li>Promote Change ideas in team environments- working with partners across other public sectors</li> <li>Produce information/ resources for Green Champions to support designing, testing, and refining ideas, concepts, and initiatives.</li> <li>Expansion of the Gamification approach - themed with national awareness days/weeks- Climate Week, NE Climate Week etc</li> </ul>	Ongoing  2021  2021-23  2021  2021-23
<b>Implementing and sustaining changes that demonstrate improvement</b> <i>(Project Score 7-10)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and expand on Green Champions Improvement Group with public sector partners Police, NHS, etc.</li> <li>Increase numbers of Green Champions.</li> <li>Progression development to be explored and new initiatives, partnerships, and evolving relationships to be encouraged.</li> <li>Continue to develop peer to peer support network for Green Champions.</li> <li>Champions to develop their own low carbon initiatives which are monitored, assessed and evaluated.</li> <li>Monitor impact of Green Champions, where possible collect data gathered by champions. Provide feedback to management.</li> </ul>	2021  2021 2021-23  2021-23  2021-23  2021-23  2021-23

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow flexibility in input - so workloads are not overburdened.</li> <li>• Establish learning, development, and training opportunities for Champions. e.g. e-learns, discussion groups, networking.</li> <li>• Share lessons learned and promote successes-internally and externally.</li> <li>• Network with external/partnership organisations to help reach LOIP aim (ensure growth through innovation, ideas developed through partnership working/sharing).</li> </ul>	2021-23
<b>Spreading Changes</b> (Project Score 9-10)	<p>Taking on board feedback through PDSA tests and initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Succession building of Green Champions throughout the organisation, increasing numbers of champions enlisted</li> <li>• Increase the scale and variety of activities.</li> <li>• Expand the network across the organisation ensure representation in key strategic areas.</li> <li>• Collaboration/ partnership working. Sharing ideas and creating opportunities internally and externally – exploring opportunities for shared project work etc.</li> <li>• Promote Green Champions campaigns/ successes. Highlight/ emphasise partnership and collaborative efforts.</li> <li>• Use range of communication channels.</li> <li>• Review lessons learned. Share with Improvement Group and Green Champions Network.</li> <li>• Expanding positive roles and behaviours through volunteering, positive incentives, partnership working etc.</li> </ul> <p>Test the effectiveness of scaling up staff led initiatives across Aberdeen. The ambitions of Green Champions are not limited to the council but to build partnership working on Green Champions in the city public sector.</p>	2021-23 2021-23 Ongoing 2021-23