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Council Leaders and Chief Executives

Chairs and Chief Executives of Public Bodies

University and College Chairs and Principals

Regional Transport Partnerships Chairs and Leads

May 2022

PUBLIC BODIES' LEADERSHIP ON THE GLOBAL CLIMATE EMERGENCY

2022 is a crucial year for Scotland's unique system of mandatory annual reporting by public bodies on their statutory climate change duties. This year the reporting duties that were strengthened in 2020 come into effect, which means that for the first time, in your annual climate change reports to be submitted by the end of November, public bodies are required to provide:

- where applicable, the body's target date for achieving zero direct emissions of greenhouse gases, or such other targets that demonstrate how the body is contributing to Scotland achieving its emissions reduction targets
- where applicable, targets for reducing indirect emissions of greenhouse gases
- how the body will align its spending plans and use of resources to contribute to reducing emissions and delivering its emissions reduction targets
- how the body will publish, or otherwise make available, its progress to achieving its emissions reduction targets
- where applicable, what contribution the body has made to helping deliver Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Programme.

I am delighted that many parts of the public sector in Scotland have already set ambitious climate change targets. Many local authorities have particularly ambitious targets, NHS Scotland, Scottish Water and Colleges Scotland all aim for net zero by 2040, the Environment and Economy Leaders Group has committed to a decade of deep decarbonisation, and Creative Scotland has set a target to become a net zero organisation by 2030.

I am also delighted that last year's response rate among public bodies required to report was excellent. It is important that we continue to have the highest possible compliance with the new reporting duties this year - we need to ensure that the entire carbon footprint of the

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public sector is covered by targets that are consistent with public bodies' leadership role and that public services are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

In ensuring that public bodies report suitably ambitious targets by end of November, Leaders, Chairs and Chief Executives will need to bear in mind the policy context that sits alongside the strengthened legislation, as set out in the Scottish Government's new guidance co-developed with Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN): [Public Sector Leadership on the Global Climate Emergency](#), published on 29 October 2021.

The *Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party Shared Policy Programme* commits to developing and agreeing through consultation a series of phased targets for the decarbonisation of public sector buildings starting in 2024, with the most difficult buildings like hospitals being decarbonised by 2038, and for all publicly-owned buildings to meet zero emission heating requirements, with a backstop of 2038.

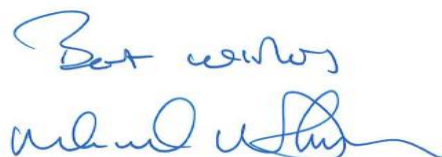
Programme for Government commitments include phasing out the need for fossil fuel cars and vans in the public sector fleet by 2025 and larger vehicles no later than 2030.

Public sector leaders must also take strong action to implement Programme for Government commitments to tackle the significant new challenge of decarbonising the £13.3bn of annual public sector procurement.

In terms of available support, the Scottish Green Public Sector Estate Decarbonisation Scheme provides a number of support mechanisms for heat decarbonisation and improving energy efficiency across buildings owned by the public sector in Scotland. The Scheme will distribute the £200 million of capital support pledged over the next 5-year period to aid the decarbonisation of Scotland's public sector estates. Transport Scotland is also assisting the decarbonisation of the public sector fleet.

The latest analysis shows that reported Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions from Scotland's public bodies have reduced by almost a third in the six years since mandatory reporting began in 2015-16. NHS Scotland has reduced emissions from its buildings by 64% since 1990. I am convinced if we continue to work together to address the challenges of pace, skills and finance that we undoubtedly face in the crucial decade ahead, Scotland's public sector will continue to show strong leadership in tackling the global climate emergency.

I will be addressing the Sustainable Scotland Network Spring [Conference](#) on 25 May to emphasise the importance of public sector leadership, and public bodies' climate change reporting, to Scotland's national endeavour on climate action.



Michael Matheson

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