



Subject:	Climate Change - Training Opportunities and Plan 2026/27
Date:	10 th September 2026
Reporting Officer:	Debbie Caldwell, Belfast Climate Commissioner
Contact Officers:	Brenda Roddy, Project Support Officer (Climate)

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes ☐ No ☒
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	☐
After Council Decision	☐
Some time in the future	☐
Never	☐

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes ☒ No ☐

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on training and awareness opportunities for Elected Members and Council staff in relation to climate change.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to (i) note the Climate Change Training Opportunities and Plan (attached at Appendix 1) which seeks to address two of the actions committed to in the Climate Action Plan (actions 1.1 and 1.2).
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Background Members will be aware that the Belfast City Council Climate Action Plan (2025), highlights the need for and benefit of increasing the awareness levels and knowledge of climate related change within the organisation and among Elected Members and staff. Accordingly, within the Climate Action Plan (CAP), there is a commitment to: - support skills development, education and training internally for climate action, tailored for the specific needs of the departments / teams. Run periodic surveys to assess the effectiveness of the training (1.1 CAP) - implement an internal climate communications campaign to engage staff on climate-related topics and news internally and externally (1.2 CAP)

3.2 3.3 3.4	Elected Member climate and sustainability training Members will recall previous discussions within the Climate and City Resilience (CCR) Committee in relation to the need for staff and member training on climate change and sustainability, noting the increased demands on Council to support the new Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations which have been introduced. On the 11 September 2025, an interactive climate awareness and behaviour change workshop was held for Elected Members on the CCR Committee. The session was designed by Sustainable NI and co-delivered with support from members of Belfast City Council's Climate Team. The training had been delivered through council existing membership of Sustainable NI. Feedback from the session was positive, with members suggesting that that Elected Members, not currently on the CCR Committee, could also benefit from similar training being made available. It was acknowledged that the council's membership of Sustainable NI provided access to comprehensive training. Subsequently, a very initial training needs assessment was undertaken in liaison with Elected Members and senior officers to inform any future training activity. Members should note that a further training needs assessment will be undertaken at the early stage of commencing the new council term.
3.5 3.6	Future training programme outline Given the significance of climate change, there is a growing volume of training and awareness initiatives and programmes being made available at a local, regional, national and international level. Accordingly, it is proposed that a segmented approach be adopted to ensuring that Elected Members and staff are aware of and can access relevant training opportunities. The intention is to utilise a combination of in-house expertise, partnership knowledge sharing and optimising training available through existing Council memberships such as Business in the Community NI, Climate NI and Sustainable NI to provide access to climate and resilience related training opportunities. The initial programme will be rolled out over a twelve-month period (2026/27) and will be subject to review and refinement as lessons are learned and new training opportunities may become available. The proposed initial scope of the training opportunities which will be made available is set out below with further details included at Appendix 1. Elected Members • Area working groups – deliver interactive sessions with each group on climate tools to support their constituency and committee work, covering topics such as warmer healthy homes and flood risk. Intention would be to deliver at least one workshop for each AWG annually. • Specialist workshops – consult with CCR Committee members to identify specific areas of interest and explore the potential to deliver tailored workshop(s) on climate related issues. Senior staff • Interactive Sessions – develop and rollout a series of short interactive sessions with the Corporate Management Team and Departmental Management Teams on climate change related matters including e.g. regional and national policy commitments and targets. Wider staff • Informal lunchtime talks – use in-house staff and external partner expertise to deliver a programme of monthly informal climate-related information lunch time sessions. Events will be delivered through a combination of hybrid in person and online and will cover topical climate related issues such as new plug-in solar panels, electric vehicles and growing your own food.

	• Specialist climate related webinars – encourage staff and Elected Members to attend events on the Sustainable NI training programme on specialist and professional topics, allowing unlimited free access available through the Council's membership of SNI. A distribution list, staff training channels and Council intranet will be used to highlight training opportunities run by partners. • Toolbox Talks - develop and deliver a pilot series of 'toolbox talks' - short training sessions for operational staff. • Online webinar-based climate training – work with other NI councils and DAERA to explore the potential and benefit of creating a package of online training modules which can be made available to all staff.
4.0	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
4.1	The training programme is based on utilising in-house expertise and staff resource, optimising training available free of cost through existing membership packages and inviting partners to contribute to events on a pro bono basis. Potential costs and funding sources relevant to any NI-wide online training resources are being explored with any future resource implications being brought back to Committee for consideration.
5.0	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
5.1	None identified.
6.0	Appendices Appendix 1 Climate Change Training Plan 2026 27