

Trowbridge AREA BOARD
14th May 2015

IS YOUR COMMUNITY READY TO TACKLE THE WILTSHIRE ENERGY CHALLENGE?

Purpose of Report

1. To raise awareness and engage the Trowbridge community in how the council is tackling the energy challenge.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. Reducing carbon emissions and preparing for unavoidable climate change addresses two of the council's priorities:
 - (i) To protect those who are most vulnerable - through reducing fuel poverty and ensuring communities are prepared for the impacts of climate change.
 - (ii) To boost the local economy - through stimulating green jobs locally.
3. The council's Business Plan commits the council to reducing its carbon footprint and increasing recycling (p18). The Plan (Outcome 3) also aspires to:
 - reducing fuel poverty in the county;
 - lowering the carbon footprint of households, businesses and public services through energy efficient buildings and renewable technology;
 - promoting sustainable transport;
 - supporting people and places to deal with unavoidable climate impacts, such as flooding.

Background

Cabinet report

4. In September 2014, Wiltshire Council became a signatory to the Local Government Association's Climate Local initiative, which replaced the Nottingham Declaration on climate change. The significant progress made to tackle fuel poverty and promote low carbon technologies was noted at this time and Cabinet requested that further public engagement on this matter be sought through the area boards. The council's Climate Local [action plan](#) has since been published on the council website.

Climate Local

5. By signing up to [Climate Local](#), councils across the country are capturing the opportunities and benefits of action on a changing climate, through leading by example, saving on their energy bills, generating income from renewable energy, attracting new jobs and investment, reducing flood risks and managing the impacts of extreme weather. 92 councils have signed up to date.
6. Wiltshire Council has been taking action on climate change since 2009 and continues to drive down carbon emissions across the county. The Climate Local initiative provides a mechanism for communicating and recognising these achievements.
7. According to government data, Wiltshire's per capita carbon emissions have fallen from 8 tonnes of carbon dioxide (tCO₂) in 2005 to 6.7 tCO₂ in 2012. This reflects a reduction in emissions nationally, but remains higher than the 2012 South West average of 6.1tCO₂ and national average of 6.2 tCO₂. The higher figure for Wiltshire is entirely attributable to higher transport emissions, as domestic and industry emissions match the national and regional averages. This cannot be explained by emissions from the M4 motorway or diesel railways. They are excluded from these figures as deemed to be outside the scope of local authority influence.

Main Considerations for the Council

Achievements

8. The council aims to reduce its annual carbon footprint by 11,823 tCO₂ by March 2017 compared with its 2010/11 footprint. In February 2014, the council's second [Carbon Management Plan](#) was published, showing significant progress in reducing the council's carbon footprint and generating annual savings on energy bills. The energy consumption data for 2013/14 shows further progress.
9. A review of progress and up-to-date consumption data were set out in the [Appendices](#) to the 16 September 2014 Cabinet report. Highlights include:
 - 661 planning applications for renewable technologies were received, of which 93% were approved.
 - The council facilitated the insulation of 1,430 homes across Wiltshire using £0.5 million invested by energy companies.
 - The council has attracted a further £1.4 million external funding for carbon reduction projects plus a £0.6 million 0% loan.
 - 112 invest to save energy efficiency projects have been implemented at a cost of £4.1 million, saving 2,475 tonnes of CO₂ and £730,000 on council energy bills annually (includes 2014/15 projects).
 - The council has set up an Energy Management System certified to ISO50001 standard.
 - Business mileage emissions were reduced by a third in 2013/14 from 2010/11 peak.
 - Over thirty schools have engaged in programmes to reduce their energy costs and carbon emissions.

- The Wiltshire Core Strategy includes specific policies around renewable energy and sustainable construction.
- Installation of biomass boilers at twelve schools and one campus, generating income from the sale of heat and the government's renewable heat incentive, while saving on schools' running costs.
- Installation of the largest single-roof local authority-owned solar panel system in the UK on the new Northacre Resource Recovery Centre in Westbury, covering an area equivalent to seven tennis courts.
- Installation of 2,500 high efficiency boilers in council housing by 2018.

More information about council carbon reduction projects and environmental community activity in the Trowbridge community area is included at **Appendix 1**.

Next steps

10. The council's ECO Strategy (2011) sets out the development of four action plans:
 - A Carbon Management plan for the council
 - A Climate Change Adaptation plan for the council
 - A Renewable Energy Action plan for the county
 - A Low Carbon Transition plan for the county
11. It was agreed by the ECO board in 2012 to streamline the number of action plans by developing a single Energy Resilience Plan for aspects relating to renewable energy, the low carbon transition and affordable warmth in Wiltshire as a whole. The aim of this new plan to be developed in 2015 is to cover all aspects of making Wiltshire a more self-sufficient county when it comes to meeting its energy requirements.
12. There are to be four main themes running through the plan:

• Sustainable transport	• Renewable energy
• Energy efficiency	• Affordable warmth
13. The development of the Energy Resilience plan provides the opportunity to work with large businesses, communities and public bodies to capture existing initiatives to drive down energy demand in the county and identify future opportunities. The council's Green Economy Team are speaking to large energy consumers in Wiltshire to find out what plans they have in place to reduce their energy costs, and to the energy sector and community energy groups who want to invest in new technologies to deliver clean energy more locally. Through this process we are identifying where there are opportunities for energy resilience in Wiltshire and the actions necessary to see these come to fruition.
14. The plan will set out how we and others in the county are working to make our energy use more secure, affordable and sustainable. Behind much of this work is the drive to reduce energy waste and our dependence on fossil fuels. Through the development of the plan we can explore the opportunities for Wiltshire securing a low carbon future linked with long-term sustainable growth. We can understand how homes, buildings and industry can become

more energy efficient and match demand for energy through a varied mix of renewable and low carbon technologies. We will be able to identify opportunities for affordable low emission vehicles and efficient alternatives to the car. The energy resilience plan will identify a network of local businesses which are able to create new jobs and skills to emerge through a thriving low carbon economy.

15. The plan's broad objectives will include: reducing carbon emissions across all sectors; maximising economic opportunities; encouraging local energy generation and low carbon infrastructure; and enabling an active role for communities.

Environmental Impact of the Proposals

16. Reducing the council's environmental impact is the subject of this report.

Financial Implications

17. By taking actions to reduce energy use, the council stands to make significant savings given that total energy and transport costs for the council were £13.6 million in 2013/14, including £0.4 million for costs relating to the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC).
18. Total spend on energy and transport costs (excluding CRC) was approximately £13 million in 2009/10 and £12 million per year for the subsequent three financial years. Over the period 2009/10 to 2013/14, the unit prices paid by the council for gas have increased by 50% and electricity by 8%. This shows the importance of reducing consumption to avoid large increases in bills.
19. The council has spent £4.1 million on energy efficiency and renewable energy projects since 2009 (including 2014/15 projects). These are projected to generate £0.73 million savings per year, paying back in less than six years on average.
20. In addition, the council is investing in an oil to biomass conversion programme across twelve schools at a cost of £2.7 million. Projected income to the council from the renewable heat incentive for schools and campuses using biomass boilers comes to circa £4 million over 20 years.
21. The council has succeeded in obtaining £1.4 million external funding for carbon reduction projects (including £0.4 million for electric vehicle charging points) plus a £0.6 million 0% loan for energy efficiency investments.
22. The CRC scheme cost for 2013/14 came to £0.42 million, of which schools paid £0.16 million. Costs for 2014/15 and beyond are projected to be £0.5 million per annum which will need to be borne corporately as schools are no longer included in the CRC scheme.

23. Under the CRC scheme, the cost has risen from £12 per tonne at the start of the scheme to £16.10 per tonne in 2015/16. It is expected that this will continue to rise in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI) year on year.
24. Any further financial implications identified through the Energy Resilience Plan will be addressed through the ECO board.

Legal Implications

25. There are no specific legal implications stemming from this voluntary initiative. However, addressing climate change is a key requirement for local authorities, as set out in the Climate Change Act 2008. Further information on the council's responsibilities relating to Climate Change and to the legislative and policy framework can be found in the [report](#) to Cabinet dated 22 June 2010 (Agenda Item 103). In addition, since that date, the Energy Act 2011 has been enacted which sets out the legal framework for the Green Deal, as well as the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme Order 2013 which sets out revisions to the CRC scheme.

Equality and Diversity Implications

26. The council's work to promote insulation schemes has focused particularly on vulnerable households as they are most at risk of fuel poverty. For example, project ACHIEVE trained up unemployed young people to deliver energy saving advice and devices to vulnerable households.

Recommendation

27. That the Area Board notes the progress the council has made in tackling the local energy challenge and in particular the initiatives in the Trowbridge community area outlined at **Appendix 1**.

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Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Overview of council carbon reduction projects and community activity in the Trowbridge community area