

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

22 June 2010

Item No. 11 – Council Responsibilities Relating to Climate Change

Comments received from Councillor Nigel Carter which he would like brought to the attention of Cabinet:

1. **Background.** It is perhaps unfortunate that the paper gives prominence to the voluntary Nottingham Declaration but understates the regulated participation in the Climate Change Commitment.

2. **Environmental Impact of Proposal .** The statement lacks specificity. What environmental impact is the paper addressing? The term 'environmental footprint' might be appropriate, but a more specific statement would be appropriate.

3. **Legal.** This is troubling. The Council is vulnerable , in relation to its 'Responsibilities Relating to climate Change' , to its failure to meet its Carbon Reduction Commitment. It is vulnerable to breaches of environmental legislation in areas such as waste management, land and water quality. The failure to distinguish between the climate change, as the over-arching, single issue challenge, and the wider range of environmental impacts represents a lack of clarity which was apparent in the draft environmental policy to which I was privy some weeks ago.

4. **Capital.** I draw attention in passing to the impact that any reduction in capital availability for the redevelopment of schools has implications for the reduction in energy consumption here. In many cases, the infrastructure - boilers, insulation and water supply - are broken down and efficiencies difficult to achieve.

Paragraph 20 would have benefitted from more detail. To what 20 Council properties does the report refer. It is inferred that these are office premises - the 4 hubs? - but it is not clear to what else the reference is made. Is a simple 'factoring up' the correct presumption?

5. **Cash Flow & Potential Penalties'/rewards.** Given the emphasis here on cash flow, is the responsibility for the council's carbon management not better vested in the Chief Finance Officer?

6. **Appendix 1.4.** The final sentence refers to '..surveys across 41 sites...' yet paragraph 20 of the report refers to savings across 25 council sites. It is therefore not apparent as to how many sites the Council is

seeking to introduce energy efficiency initiatives.

7. Local Targets. The final paragraph of this section of Appendix 2.1 reports a 2010 target for the installed capacity of renewable energy, but does not comment on the achievements to date, whose target this was and when it was established. In these circumstances, what is the relevance of the statement? (This is only partially addressed in Appendix 2.3)

8. Performance and Audit Requirements. The idea that the council must manage targets for *renewable electricity capacity and renewable heat capacity* (Appendix 2.2, final para) reported only for Swindon and Wiltshire is patently a nonsense unless there are unreported initiatives agreed on between the two councils. If this was the case, one infers that reference to any agreement should be made in the report. If not, then steps to seek reporting separately from Swindon would be welcome.

The assertion that 30 turbines would address the shortfall in our renewable energy generation capacity is a little misleading as the rated output of the machines differs somewhat from the actual output. Members may wish to visit the American Wind Turbine Association's web site - www.awaea.org/faq/wwt_basics.html to read more facts on this issue.

9. Reducing the Army's Environmental Impact. This is a 'good news' story but does not, apparently, impact upon the council's performance. While the exchange of 'good/best practice' might be encouraged, do we have the in-house resources to divert into this exercise? What benefits does council see in it?

10. Appendix 3.3 How is the council performing? Under 1.1 of the *Summary of N188 Level 0 and 1 work*, reference to the training of elected members is made. This work was, I believe, undertaken in March 2010. 1.3 Makes no mention of the DEFRA document UKCP09 <http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk>, which provides significant information on climate change for each 25km grid square in the UK. (I note the cursory reference to the document in 3.4).

11. How are we meeting our commitments? Paragraph 3.4 introduces yet a third body - the Resilient Council Group - into discussion on our processes. We have the Council's Climate Change Board, presumably administering policy and target setting but it is not apparent as to the nature and authority of the Resilient Council Group in providing endorsement for our processes. Is this related in any way to the Wiltshire Resilient Communities Partnership?

12. Appendix 2. The guidance speaks largely to reduction or mitigation of carbon emissions. The crucial consideration should be for **avoidance**, with mitigation and reduction consequential actions for our inability to avoid GHG emissions. I would propose that 'Climate Change' is given pre-eminence and that the cabinet report template should carry the reference *Climate Change and other environmental considerations*. It may be helpful for officers to receive, in due course, some form of life cycle matrix which helps then identify

the phases in the life of a product or service and the environmental impacts arising. This would be potentially helpful when, on page 119, the report discusses the *tendering and re-tendering for new and existing services* - why does this not, incidentally, discuss products as well?