

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

13 March 2018

Position Statement on the Council's Eco Strategy

Local authorities have a wide range of responsibilities relating to climate change, and it is necessary to have a robust framework for discharging these responsibilities in the form of a strategy. Like other authorities across England, Wiltshire Council is a signatory of the Climate Local Initiative, successor to the Nottingham Declaration and 10:10 campaign. The initiative commits the council to continuing to identify ways of saving money on energy bills, reduce carbon emissions, reduce flood risks and managing the impacts of extreme weather.

To meet the challenge of climate change in Wiltshire, the council developed an Energy Change and Opportunity ("ECO") strategy, which set out the council's ambition to reduce its carbon emissions and lead the county's low carbon transition, and prepare for unavoidable climate change.

The Strategy was consulted upon at Environment Select Committee, the Climate Change Board (the then name of the ECO Board), and Wiltshire Environmental Alliance, in 2010.

The Strategy was approved by Cabinet in January 2011, renaming the Climate Change Board to ECO Board and agreeing that it should oversee the delivery of the Strategy, and approve and monitor the delivery of the Action Plans listed below.

Development of this Strategy and the ability to catalyse its implementation had a resource implication for which budget was allocated. An ECO Team accountable to the ECO board was created, using this budget, responsible for strategic development, coordination, and administration of the ECO board. In order to deliver the ECO Strategy, numerous Action Plans and Strategies were produced.

Timeline of Action Plans and activities:

Climate Change Adaptation Plan	Approved by ECO Board	2011
Carbon Management Plan	Approved by ECO Board	2013
Climate Local Initiative (including commitments and actions)	Signed by Cabinet Member	2014
Energy Resilience Plan	Approved by ECO Board	2015
Environmental Policy	Signed by Cabinet Member	2015

WiltsCAN/Wiltshire Declaration on Climate Change	Signed by Cabinet Member	2015
Greenhouse Gas emissions report	Published	2016
Climate Change Adaptation Plan	Revision; approved by ECO Board	2016

Having the overarching ECO Strategy and supplementary cross-cutting delivery plans in place allowed the council to consider the impacts and opportunities across all the council services, making connections between the complimentary work of different teams, sharing information and joining up resources. Bringing these areas together under each delivery plan offered the opportunity to overview the council's likely response to a changing environment, identify potential gaps and question assumptions in provision.

It was recognised that much of the delivery work would be resourced and taken forward by the relevant service directorate. These service directorates would include:

- a. Waste
- b. Transport
- c. Environment
- d. Procurement
- e. Facilities Management
- f. Planning
- g. Communications

Since the ECO Strategy was first published, Wiltshire Council has produced a Core Strategy for the county which identifies addressing climate change as a key strategic objective; including policies which will deliver; sustainable growth, build resilient communities, provide a network of green infrastructure, ensure more sustainable transport and reduce the risk of flooding. From this high level political direction, the Council have produced various strategies and updated plans, formed working groups, created tools and provided training to ensure we protect the residents and businesses within Wiltshire from the impacts of a changing climate and ensure joined up thinking with key delivery organisations.

All of this activity, and future planned activity, is now embedded into the culture, processes and policies of the aforementioned service directorates to take forward. The action plans approved by the ECO Board are being taken forward and reviewed (as per ECO Board recommendation) periodically by the lead service directorates as part of their implementation.

The council's Energy Services team is committed to identifying opportunities to invest in energy efficiency measures. These projects have initially been targeted at facilities where there is certainty regarding the future of the facility and where there are significant and cost-effective opportunities for energy saving.

Furthermore, the council is committed to work with partners through the Energy Resilience Plan to reduce Wiltshire's carbon footprint, and promote Low Carbon Developments through planning policy. Wiltshire currently generates 22% of its energy consumption from renewables, and in 2015/16 was the second top local authority area for commissioning the highest amount of new capacity. Annual reporting for the south west is published by RegenSW. Their report stated "Wiltshire was once again the area to add the greatest amount to its installed capacity, with 171 MW of new projects Wroughton airfield solar farm in Swindon was the largest renewable electricity project to be built in the south west in 2015/16 at 50 MW, followed by 49.6 MW Snarlton Farm in Wiltshire".

The council aims to meet and exceed household recycling targets, continue to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill, and continue to reduce organisational energy demand through energy efficiency projects and renewable energy projects in the course of managing its facilities.

Whilst revising the Climate Change Adaptation Plan, it was important to ensure that all future actions were fully embedded within existing work programmes across the Council. Working with the various services, an agreed Action Plan was produced.

The Wiltshire Pension Fund administered by Wiltshire Council on behalf of 170 different organisations is responsible for over £2bn of assets. The Fund was commended by carbon reduction lobby groups in Professional Pensions along with East Sussex and the Environment Agency as demonstrating good examples on how to address climate risk as part of its Investment Strategy Statement. The Pension Fund currently requests investment managers to take account of both financial and non-financial issues such as climate change in its investment decision making, and will look to undertake a carbon footprint of the fund's equity portfolio and consider reduction options, as well as conducting a temperature rise scenario analysis that may have implications for the Fund's future asset allocation. In 2016, the Fund had no direct investments and only 2% indirect allocations to fossil fuel producing companies.

The ECO Board meets on a biannual basis to oversee the council's strategy and implementation, monitor progress and performance, and act as the public face of the council in terms of Climate Change management. As the ECO strategy is now embedded and the administrative overhead of managing the Board is modest, there is no ongoing requirement to maintain a dedicated ECO team.

Comprehensive information about climate change and what the council is doing to tackle and prepare for it, is available for the council's website at:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/green-economy-climate-change>

Context

Climate Change Act 2008

The Climate Change Act made UK the first country in the world to introduce a legally binding emissions reduction target of an 80% cut in national greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2050. Although the Climate Change Act's main focus is on mitigating emissions, it also provides a statutory framework for planning and implementing adaptation. The Act also identifies a range of organisations (water and energy companies etc., **but not including Local Authorities**) that have a duty to prepare adaptation reports that outline the key impacts of climate change upon the functions of their organisation and develop proposals and policies for how to prepare for these risks.

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice guidance:

Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the National Planning Policy Framework expects to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 93 and 94; include the requirements for local authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in line with the provisions and objectives of the Climate Change Act 2008, and co-operate to deliver strategic priorities which include climate change. The Wiltshire Core Strategy identifies addressing climate change as a key strategic objective, including policies which will deliver; sustainable growth, build resilient communities, provide a network of green infrastructure, ensure more sustainable transport and reduce the risk of flooding.

Clean Growth Strategy (2017):

Achieving clean growth and ensuring affordable energy and boost jobs and productivity. Commercial opportunities will come out of this strategy. Four areas identified:

- Improving business and industry efficiencies
- Improving homes
- Accelerating the shift to low carbon transport
- Delivering clean, smart, flexible power

Leading in the Public Sector – 2% of UK Emissions

45. Agree **tighter targets for 2020 for central government** and actions to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions beyond this date
46. Introduce a **voluntary public sector target of a 30 per cent** reduction in carbon emissions by 2020-21 for the wider public sector
47. Provide £255 million of funding for **energy efficiency improvements** in England and help public bodies access sources of funding

Government Leadership in Driving Clean Growth

Industrial Strategy (2017 White Paper):

- Increase in public spending to invest in science, research and innovation (to catalyse low carbon innovation across multiple sectors).
- Commitment to upgrade digital, energy, transport, housing, water and flood defence infrastructure, through the National Productivity Investment Fund – strengthening demand for the innovative new clean energy technologies and services that businesses are creating.
- Support for businesses as part of the transition to the low carbon economy.
- An additional* £1.8 billion from the LGF for new set of Growth Deals (*autumn statement 2016), to make the best of local skills and resources to drive productivity, job creation and growth through the clean energy economy.
- The Industrial Strategy White Paper will position the UK as a leader in the low carbon economy.

NHS Standard Contract

This is an annual framework reviewed each year by NHS England. The framework often includes provisions for adaptation to climate change, emergency preparedness and business continuity. The 2016/17 Service Conditions require providers to:

- demonstrate progress on climate change adaptation, mitigation and sustainable development, including performance against carbon reduction management plans, and must provide a summary of that progress in its annual report
- comply with service conditions for emergencies and incidents
- comply with the Civil Contingencies Act
- comply with Emergency Preparedness Resilience and Response guidelines
- co-operate through the Local Health Resilience Partnerships and contribute to the coordinated development and review of any local area Business Continuity Plans and Incident Response Plans

Sustainable Development Strategy for the Health, Public and Social Care System 2014-2020

The Sustainable Development Strategy describes the vision for a sustainable health and care system by reducing carbon emissions, protecting natural resources, preparing communities for extreme weather events and promoting healthy lifestyles and environments. Having a board approved Sustainable Development Management Plan (SDMP) is one of the cornerstones of the Strategy.

The Council, as a large energy user organisation using public money, needs to be as energy efficient as possible. All the quick and value for money opportunities have been identified and delivered (street lighting, biomass boilers, electric vehicles etc). Business cases for further work are being drawn up by the SAFM team.

Vulnerable householders in or at risk of fuel poverty sits with Public Health.

Supporting businesses to be more energy efficient and installing renewable technologies sits with the Growth Hub (SWLEP) for advice and signposting.

Current oversight sits with the ECO Board, an officer group chaired by Cllr Toby Sturgis which meets twice a year. Secretariat support is currently still provided through Economic Development and Planning.

Recent Funding:

BEIS, which incorporates Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) where the funding used to come from, has recognised that as a result of the cuts Local Authorities have experienced over the past years, that Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Renewables are not being driven forward due to a lack of funding. They have decided to drive this area of work through LEPs. SWLEP have been successful in securing £40k for a local Energy Strategy, which is being procured now, to be complete by May 2018.

Further funding of £1m, has been provided by BEIS to a number of LEPs: Heart of the South West, Cornwall and IoS, Dorset, Solent, G9, SWLEP, and West of England for an Energy Hub. This will consist of a team of 7 staff funded for 2 years to develop and bring forward robust business cases for low carbon projects.

Tim Martienssen

Director, Economic Development and Planning

Annex 1

Summary of work undertaken since the ECO Strategy was produced in 2011

- produced Core Strategy for Wiltshire which identifies addressing climate change as a key strategic objective, including policies which will deliver; sustainable growth, build resilient communities, provide a network of green infrastructure, ensure more sustainable transport and reduce the risk of flooding,
- revised the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan, making it available on-line,
- produced a design guide for developers incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems, and are finalising a Ground Water Flooding Strategy,
- put in place a Strategy and Delivery plan regarding our duties under the Flood and Water Management Act,
- established a Strategic Flood Risk Management Group to review progress on flood alleviation and the operational flood working groups,
- held workshops for each area board, encouraging them to create combined emergency plans addressing flooding, health, highways and utilities,
- launched a “Planning for Emergencies – Are you ready” on-line guide, detailing how to prepare yourself, family and business,
- reviewed Business Continuity Plan, Major Incident Plan and Recovery Plan, and developed an Integrated Emergency Management Plan,
- established a Regional Resilience Group, made up of Business Continuity leads from each local authority,
- developed Actions for dealing with Heatwaves from level 1 (preparedness) to level 4 (emergency situation),
- put in place a joint communication plan with Wiltshire Commissioning Group, Adult social Care and Public Protection addressing winter/cold issues,
- produced an Air Quality Plan – covering the eight air quality management areas across the county,
- created an Air Quality website to communicate information and daily air quality reports to the public,
- participated in the government's Review of Transport Resilience and produced a Wiltshire Transport Resilience report,
- facilitated development of the South West Highways Alliance “Resilience Assessment Tool” - a web-based toolkit using risk assessment and analysis to provide adaptation and mitigation options for highway manage

The creation of the detailed action plans and their implementation has meant that the council is already doing the following to **reduce carbon emissions** (source: statement to WiltSCAN October 2015):

- Energy consumption from corporate estate reduced by 35% since 2010/11
- 120 invest to save energy efficiency projects have been implemented at a cost of £4.4 million,
- saving 2580 tonnes of CO₂ and £617,000 on annual council energy spend
- ISO50001 accredited Energy Management System
- Installation of solar panels on corporate buildings saving £114,000 and 276 tCO₂ to date

- Streetlight dimming and part-night lighting strategy
- Electric pool cars
- Council business mileage emissions reduced by almost a third
- Installation of public rapid electric vehicle charging points at strategic points in the county
- Biomass boilers scheme in schools and campuses saving £131,000 and 769 tCO₂ to date
- Insulation of 1,430 homes across Wiltshire
- Setting ambitious targets for recycling and reduction of waste to landfill sites
- Over thirty schools have engaged in carbon reduction programmes
- Wiltshire Core Strategy includes policies for renewable energy and sustainable construction
- Installation of 2,500 high efficiency boilers in council housing by 2018