

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

1 March 2012

Update on and Review of ECO Strategy Action Plan Structure

Executive Summary

Since Cabinet approved the Council's first Energy, Change and Opportunity (ECO) Strategy in January 2011, work has been ongoing to develop the associated action plans. As the ECO Team has since become responsible for the affordable warmth agenda a revision in the number and focus of these action plans is proposed.

The ECO Strategy also committed the Council to developing a Climate Change Adaption Plan to reduce the risk that Council services could face due to a changing climate. This report presents the final draft Climate Change Adaptation Plan to the Committee for comment.

Proposal

For the Committee to approve the ECO Board's recommendation to streamline three action plans under the ECO Strategy into an Energy Resilience plan for Wiltshire, and provide comments on the Climate Change Adaptation Plan due to be approved by Corporate Leadership Team on 5 March 2012.

Reason for Proposal

The Committee has to date taken a close interest in the development of the ECO Strategy and its associated plans, therefore the ECO Board wishes to receive comments from the Committee on the proposed way forward.

ALISTAIR CUNNINGHAM
Service Director for Economy and Enterprise

Update on and Review of ECO Strategy Action Plan Structure

Purpose of Report

1. For the Committee to approve the ECO Board's recommendation to streamline three action plans under the ECO Strategy into an Energy Resilience Plan for Wiltshire, and provide comments on the Climate Change Adaptation Plan due to be approved by Corporate Leadership Team on 5 March 2012.

Background

2. The Council's first Energy, Change and Opportunity (ECO) Strategy was approved by Cabinet in January 2011. The strategy made the following statement:

This is a framework document which will be linked to Council strategies to ensure our objectives are embedded across the entire organisation. It will be supplemented by detailed action plans to set out more specifically how we are going to deliver our climate change ambitions. As a minimum we will produce the following four action plans during 2011 and 2012:

- *Carbon Management Plan for the Council's emissions*
 - *Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Wiltshire*
 - *Low Carbon Transition Plan for Wiltshire*
 - *Renewable Energy Action Plan for Wiltshire*
3. Cabinet agreed that the ECO Board should oversee the delivery of the strategy and be responsible for approving and monitoring delivery against the action plans.
 4. The Council's Carbon Management Plan was published in March 2011. The Climate Change Adaptation Plan was approved by the ECO Board at its last meeting and is due to be approved by the Corporate Leadership Team on 5 March 2012. The final two action plans are yet to be developed.

Main Considerations for the Committee

Streamlining ECO Strategy action plans

5. There is an opportunity to take stock of the proposed approach due to the following reasons:
 - After the ECO Strategy was published, the lead responsibility for the affordable warmth agenda moved from Private Sector Housing to the ECO team. This crucial area of work which tackles fuel poverty in Wiltshire requires an updated plan given that the previous affordable warmth strategy was adopted in 2002.
 - At the same time, development of the Renewable Energy Action Plan has not progressed as fast as anticipated and development of the Low Carbon Transition Plan has not yet commenced. However, some elements of the low carbon transition plan (e.g. the Council's approach to the Green Deal) require a clear direction during 2012 in order to make the most of new opportunities.
 - There is potential for overlap and duplication between the different plans for energy resilience, leading to a lack of clarity.
6. While the Council's Carbon Management Plan aims to tackle 2% of the county's carbon emissions, this document has a much narrower remit and relates to services directly within the Council's control. It is therefore proposed to keep this plan separate from the more strategic plans to tackle Wiltshire's emissions and energy needs as a whole.
7. It is recommended that the Low Carbon Transition Plan, Renewable Energy Action Plan and Affordable Warmth Action Plan are streamlined into an **Energy Resilience Plan for Wiltshire** (see figure 1). This plan will cover all aspects of making Wiltshire a more self-sufficient county when it comes to meeting its energy requirements.

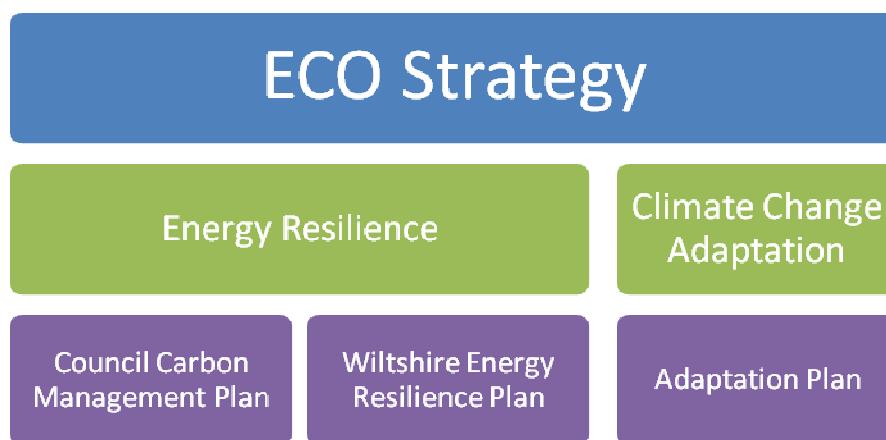


Figure 1: proposed ECO Strategy Action Plan structure

8. The Energy Resilience plan will be published in sections as they are developed during 2012 and 2013. It is anticipated that the complete plan will cover the following areas:
 - Health through Warmth in Wiltshire
 - Energy efficiency in Wiltshire (including our approach to the Green Deal)
 - Renewable energy in Wiltshire
 - Low carbon transport in Wiltshire
9. All sections above will outline appropriate actions for developing the green economy and supply chain in Wiltshire to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the low carbon transition.

Climate Change Adaptation Plan

10. In the summer of 2010 work was undertaken to complete 1:1 risk assessments with Council officers to identify which Council services might be vulnerable to changes in our climate. In total, 113 interviews were carried out to assess vulnerabilities and opportunities associated with predicted changes in our climate. For the purpose of these assessments mid range climate change estimates, as highlighted by the United Kingdom Climate Impact Programme ([UKCIP](#)), were used.
11. Arising from these interviews, a total of 63 risks to Council services were identified, of which 29 had a high risk score. Where possible, ways to reduce the risk scores have been agreed and these should be implemented during the term of the plan (2011 – 2016).
12. To communicate this issue more effectively, a summary document outlining in general terms the risks faced by the Council has been produced (see **Appendix 1**).
13. Work to mitigate against the 29 risks identified will be long-term, as the Council progresses through a cycle of renewing contracts and evolving services. Instead of formally registering departmental risks, a yearly assessment of how each of the teams are preparing for Climate Change Adaption issues will be undertaken by the ECO Team. Findings will be reported to the Risk and Assurance Team with conclusions drawn on the Council's performance.
14. If it is felt that more needs to be done, the Risk and Assurance Team will seek high level engagement for stronger commitment to mitigating issues.
15. The completion of the Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan marks the end of the information gathering phase that sets a baseline for how the Council is currently performing. It is now essential that progress is made by each of the officers responsible for individual actions, supported by the ECO Team, to mitigate the risks faced by the Council.

16. Feedback on performance on reducing Climate Change Adaptation risks will be reported on an annual basis to the ECO Board, with the first report due to June 2012.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

17. The aim of the ECO team is to limit carbon emissions from the Council and from the county overall, which will have a positive impact on the environment. The development of an Energy Resilience plan will result in the Council working both internally and externally to reduce carbon emissions and make Wiltshire a more self sufficient county when it comes to meeting its energy requirements.
18. The draft Climate Change Adaptation Plan in **Appendix 1** forms the Council's response to preparing for unavoidable climate change.

Equality and Diversity Impact of the Proposal

19. The work that the Council is doing to reduce fuel poverty benefits is advantaged groups in the community.

Financial Implications

20. Financial comments to follow.

Legal Implications

21. Central Government is committed to reducing the UK's carbon emissions by 34% by 2020 through the Climate Change Act (2008). Any future progress made through the Energy Resilience Plan will contribute towards this. In parallel with this, as an organisation the Council is legally required to take part in the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) trading scheme requiring allowances to be purchased to cover carbon emissions relating to its services.

Conclusion

22. Following publication of the ECO Strategy in January 2011, changes mean there is now an opportunity to review and rationalise the action plans proposed. The Committee's views on this approach are welcomed.
23. Considerable progress has been made in the past 18 months to develop a Climate Change Adaptation Plan which members of the Committee are invited to comment on before approval by the Corporate Leadership Team and publication.

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Appendix 1: Climate Change Adaptation Plan – Final Draft