

## Wiltshire Council

### Cabinet

16 September 2014

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**Subject:** Climate Local Initiative

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Toby Sturgis – Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property, Waste

**Key Decision:** No

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#### Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to recommend that Wiltshire Council becomes a signatory to the Local Government Association's Climate Local initiative, which replaces the Nottingham Declaration on climate change. The report also provides an overview of progress made in tackling climate change since the council signed the Nottingham Declaration in 2009.

#### Proposals

That Cabinet:

- (i) Agrees that the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property and Waste signs the Climate Local initiative on behalf of the council and that the action plan at **Appendix 1** be published on the council website.
- (ii) Notes the significant progress made since signing the Nottingham Declaration on climate change.
- (iii) Notes council activity to tackle fuel poverty and promote low carbon technologies and encourages further public engagement on this matter.

#### Reason for Proposals

With total energy costs of £13.6 million in 2014/15, Wiltshire Council is one of the biggest employers in the county. It therefore has a responsibility to ensure it is doing everything it can to reduce its energy use and set an example for its communities across the county.

Climate Local is a Local Government Association initiative to drive and support council action on climate change. The initiative is the only one of its type in England and is the successor to the old Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change which Wiltshire Council signed in 2009.

As of April 2014, 87 local authorities had signed up to Climate Local, including Hampshire County Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Bath & North East Somerset Council.

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.

Wiltshire Council has been taking action on climate change since 2009 and continues to drive down carbon emissions across the county as demonstrated in **Appendices 2 and 3**. The Climate Local initiative provides a mechanism for communicating and recognising these achievements.

**Dr Carlton Brand**  
**Corporate Director**

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### Purpose of Report

1. To recommend that Wiltshire Council signs the Climate Local Initiative and publishes the action plan at **Appendix 1** on its website.
2. To review progress since the council became a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on climate change in 2009.

### Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

3. 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.
4. 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.

### Main Considerations for the Council

5. Climate Local is an LGA initiative to drive, inspire and support council action on climate change. The initiative is the only one of its type in England and is the successor to the old Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change which Wiltshire Council signed in 2009.

6. As of April 2014, 87 local authorities had signed up to Climate Local, including Hampshire County Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Oxfordshire County Council and B&NES. When signing up to the initiative, councils are required to publish an action plan and review this on a regular basis. The Wiltshire Climate Local Action Plan, set out at **Appendix 1**, will enable the council to achieve the commitments in its Business Plan.
7. Wiltshire Council has been taking action on climate change since 2009 and continues to drive down its own carbon footprint, as well as carbon emissions across the county.
8. The council aims to reduce its annual carbon footprint by 11,823 tCO<sub>2</sub> by March 2017 compared with its 2010/11 footprint. The [Carbon Management Plan](#), updated in 2014, sets out how this will be achieved through rationalising and improving the council estate, working with schools, delivering more energy efficient street-lighting and reducing emissions from the council's fleet.
9. A review of progress and up-to-date consumption data is set out at **Appendices 2 and 3**. 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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.

## Background

10. In June 2010, Cabinet noted the responsibilities the authority has with regard to climate change; the implications for policy development and service delivery; the risks relating to the discharge of these responsibilities; and the council's performance at that time. Cabinet agreed that the Climate Change Board (now ECO Board) should oversee the delivery of these responsibilities and monitor

future performance and approved the establishment of a long-term carbon reduction fund.

11. Cabinet further agreed that in order for the environmental implications of all council decisions to be fully considered, all committee reports should address key questions relating to environmental impact.
12. Since that date, an ambitious ECO Strategy has been published (2011) and significant success has been achieved through the associated programmes of work. In 2012 the council won the climate change impact award in the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Corporate Green Awards and in 2013 the council was shortlisted for the Local Government Chronicle's national energy efficiency award.
13. 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 (see **Appendix 2**).
14. According to government data, Wiltshire's per capita carbon emissions have fallen from 8 tonnes of carbon dioxide (tCO<sub>2</sub>) in 2005 to 6.7 tCO<sub>2</sub> in 2012. This reflects a reduction in emissions nationally, but remains higher than the 2012 South West average of 6.1tCO<sub>2</sub> and national average of 6.2 tCO<sub>2</sub>. 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.

### **Changes to National Policy since 2010**

15. Under the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) scheme, in April 2010 the council became liable to pay £12 for every tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted. This liability included carbon emissions from schools until March 2014. Since April 2014 schools are no longer included in the council's CRC footprint but streetlights are included and the council has to pay £16 for every tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted.
16. The National Planning Policy Framework published in 2012 makes addressing climate change one of the core land use planning principles for both plan-making and decision-taking. To be found sound, Local Plans need to reflect this principle and enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework. These 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.
17. The feed-in tariff which incentivises the generation of green electricity has been widely taken up since 2010, and the renewable heat incentive which is the world's first long-term financial support programme for renewable heat was launched in 2011.

18. Energy companies now only fund insulation measures for vulnerable households. Under the Green Deal, other households are expected to take out loans to cover the cost of any energy efficiency measures. These loans are paid back through electricity bills.
19. The government's solar strategy published in 2014 sets out a road map for increasing the contribution of solar energy to meet the UK's energy requirements.
20. In April 2014, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the last in a series of three reports, which together assess the physical evidence that climate change is happening, the expected impacts over the course of this century and what would need to happen to curb the rise in greenhouse gases.

### **Safeguarding Implications**

21. Tackling fuel poverty and the impacts of climate change will have a positive effect on safeguarding as impacts disproportionately affect vulnerable children and adults.

### **Public Health Implications**

22. The public health implications of climate change are significant; for example, from the impacts of floods and heat waves. Air pollution also has negative health impacts. Many common air pollutants are 'climate active', and reducing emissions will lessen the warming effect on our climate. A warming climate also threatens to make air quality worse, with the prevalence of harmful photochemical smog likely to increase throughout longer, hotter summers. Both sets of emissions largely arise from the same combustion processes – vehicle engines, power generation, homes and industry - therefore an integrated approach to tackling air quality and climate change are beneficial.
23. The benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be felt several decades in the future, whilst air quality benefits are felt 'here and now' in the form of improved public health and environmental improvement.

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

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

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

25. 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.

## **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken**

26. Climate Local is a voluntary initiative but as neighbouring councils have signed up to it, there is a reputational risk if Wiltshire Council does not. There is also the risk of failure to demonstrate the priority and importance of the related actions and outcomes within our Business Plan.

## **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks**

27. There are no negative implications to signing up to Climate Local as the council is already committed to taking action in all the areas listed in **Appendix 1**. The Action Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure that any changes are accurately reflected in the council's commitments.

## **Financial Implications**

28. There are no additional financial implications to signing the Climate Local initiative as all the actions in **Appendix 1** are already resourced. 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 CRC costs. **Appendix 2** sets out the costs relating to the council's energy use.
29. 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.
30. 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.
31. 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.
32. 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.
33. 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.

## **Legal Implications**

34. 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 11). 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.

## **Options Considered**

35. The council could opt not to sign up to the Climate Local initiative; however, this would not be recognising the significant progress of the past five years or current commitments to continue this work.

## **Conclusions**

36. The council has made significant progress in tackling its carbon emissions and energy costs since it signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in 2009. The Climate Local initiative offers an opportunity for the council to restate its commitment to tackling climate change at the local level and to communicate both progress to date and planned actions over the coming years.

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## **Background Papers**

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Climate Local Wiltshire – our commitments and actions
- Appendix 2: Costs and consumption data relating to the council's energy use
- Appendix 3: Review of progress