

Date of Meeting	14th December 2006
Title of Report	Climate Change - A Long Term Policy
Portfolio	Environment
Link to Corporate Priorities	Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do
Key Decision	Yes
Executive Workplan Ref	B291
Public Report	Yes
Summary of Report	
<p>In April of this year, the Government produced its long awaited response to the major issues created by climate change, the white paper was entitled "Climate Change - The UK Programme 2006". It accepts the premise that climate change "is now inevitable" and that "domestic action" is essential.</p> <p>The "Stern Review – The Economics of Climate Change", an independent report for the Government was published on 30th October 2006 and sets out possible costs of a long term strategy at both domestic and international level for a series of programmes and actions to reduce carbon use. It also estimates the costs of not taking action.</p> <p>The Government 2006 White Paper on Climate Change calls for action by local government based on action programmes to be reviewed within the performance management framework.</p> <p>This report accepts and endorses the Government stance in principle and sets out the timetable for the creation of a Council Strategy on Climate Change and the production of an action plan.</p> <p>The approach taken for our strategy, is based on a practical consensus that the Council should, within the resources available, work to become a leading authority in terms of its commitment to countering the effects of climate change.</p> <p>That we should strive to energetically and purposefully, demonstrate Community Leadership in partnership with others, to make a significant contribution to the task of mitigating the effects of global warming.</p> <p>That our policies, strategies and actions should be targeted, practical and measurable with the end view that North Wiltshire should make a determined and lasting contribution to the mitigation of climate change.</p>	
Officer Recommendations - See overleaf	
Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.	

Financial Implications

Legal Implications

Community &
Environmental Implications

Human Resources Implications

Equality & Diversity Implications

Yes

None

Yes

Yes

None

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Officer Recommendations

- 1. That the work of the Executive Working Group on Climate Change be endorsed and that a strategy be produced by March 2007 and an action programme by July 2007.**
- 2. That the Council takes planned and measurable steps to demonstrate to the community that its own activities and policies on climate change are in accordance with accepted best practice.**
- 3. That a Climate Change programme covering energy management, campaigning, partnership arrangements, community involvement, procurement and behavioural change, be produced for consideration by this Committee, (such a programme to include long term resource and corporate priority issues).**
- 4. That the Council through its powers, service delivery and responsibilities, ensures that all its current activities are included in any future community campaign.**
- 5. In view of the Government pledge to "see a significant increase in the level of engagement by local government", plus a commitment to include an "appropriate focus on action for climate change in the local government performance framework", that a project plan be initiated to meet Government performance delivery standards by 2008.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Government Paper, Climate Change - The UK Programme 2006 was published In April 2006 and contains the "blueprint" for an action programme designed at international and domestic level, to mitigate the potentially very serious effects of global warming. This paper includes recommendations for action at community and local government levels and commits to an inclusion of the Council's policies, strategies and actions in the revised performance management framework for 2008.
- 1.2 The Government Paper asserts that climate change is probably the greatest long term challenge to the human race. It also claims that the scientific evidence is now overwhelming and that if the growth in carbon emissions is left unchecked, there could be a devastating impact on the world economy and the natural world.
- 1.3 Since 1990, global temperatures have risen by 0.20C and atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations have increased from 354 parts per million to over 380 parts per million and continue to rise. Unchecked, global average temperatures could rise by 5.80C by the end of this century with serious and perhaps irreversible effects.
- 1.4 This report attempts to recognise the direction of Government policy in relation to the already high commitment to sustainable policies and energy reduction issues and to map out a positive and achievable way forward. The approach taken in the report, is that the North Wiltshire District Council ethos on climate change should be energetic, pragmatic, achievable and measurable.
- 1.5 The "Stern Review" adds further impetus to need the to tackle climate change by providing a detailed and well argued case for the economic costs of taking action against the case for doing nothing. It lists the probable international costs attributable to climate change, from the flooding of coastal land to the impact of carbon emissions from developing nations.
- 1.6 It is expected that a draft policy and strategy will be placed before the Executive Working Group in January 2007 with an expectation that a complete document can be considered by the full Executive in March/April 2007. This will allow an implementation plan to be forged and for consultation to take place with partners in June/July 2007. The Government performance management reporting system will include consideration of climate change in 2008. There is no indication as yet, of any additional performance indicators planned for climate change issues, although these cannot be ruled out.

2. Options and Options Appraisal

- 2.1 Option 1: To endorse the Government's Climate Change programme and fashion a distinctly "North Wiltshire" framework of polices, strategies and action plans. Implemented on a partnership basis with project managed aims, objectives and targets to help reduce global warming.
- 2.2 Option 2: To note the Government Paper and refer it to community partners and the Local Area Agreement arrangements for comment.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 Since the signing of the Kyoto agreement covering greenhouse gas reduction and the commitment to reduce emissions by 23-25 per cent by 2010, the world has gradually woken up to the grave dangers that climate change poses. Measures introduced in the UK since 1997 will achieve carbon dioxide emission reductions, calculated from

the base year, by 15 to 18 percent by 2010. The aim is to reduce emissions by 60 per cent by 2050. Domestic action is essential as the UK is responsible for 2 percent of all global emissions. The Government message is that both national and international actions need to be taken and that emissions reduction and prosperity can go hand-in-hand.

3.2 The other clear message is that organisations and individuals must take full responsibility for their actions with everyone making a full contribution to the effort. The strong message from the Council to the local community will need to be focussed on the basis of making individual and collective efforts to reduce energy use. It is not to over-estimate the seriousness of the situation, to predict that the next few years will need to see radical and sustained changes in the way we operate plant and buildings, utilise transport, plan our use of land, space and resources and how we conduct every aspect of our day to day lives, if the global warming problem is to be successfully addressed.

3.3 The Council, acting as a community leader and exercising corporate social responsibility, is in a unique position not only to demonstrate its commitment to the issues through the operation of its own premises and activities, but also through the active promotion of energy reduction policies through a climate change strategy.

The Government advocates the adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This is a European Community concept, defined as the actions of an organisation based on the need to reduce carbon use and to act in a sustainable manner. Every process, action and procedure has to be mindful of the need to act in a sustainable manner and reduce energy use and thereby shrink the Council's "carbon footprint". It also supports the concept of supporting the social, economic and environmental welfare of the local community.

3.4 The statutory and discretionary powers of the Council are very pertinent to the successful implementation of a climate change strategy. Energy management, Spatial Policy, Development Control, Building Regulations, Partnership Agreements, plus other Council activities, can all contribute significantly to a strategic policy.

3.5 There may be a need to consider at policy level, the probable impact of climate change demands. Such matters as wind turbines, solar panels, bio-fuel manufacturing, alternative fuel plants and other related matters will require a clear and considered Council policy approach.

4.0 Involving the Community

4.1 One of the features of the "sustainability" movement is the encouragement given to grass root movements to reinforce the concept of communities and individuals undertaking behavioural change by their own volition. There are existing examples in North Wiltshire of self-sustaining communities, which have fashioned a community action plans to include energy reduction through mutual self-help.

4.2 The Community Strategy for North Wiltshire will be the essential link to climate change policies for the area and this is where substantial progress may be expected in the future. It will also be advisable to build on links with the Local Area Agreement for Wiltshire.

5.0 Members and Staff

5.1 With four hundred personnel available under this heading, it would be possible to consider, through voluntary agreement, this collective group of people as a climate

change resource. Through a process of training and information supply, this number of people could have a positive impact for the community message on climate change.

6.0 The District Council as an Information Resource

- 6.1 One of the characteristics of the previous "sustainability" movement was its essential diversity. This was useful in some ways but led to a sometimes confused message and a plethora of aims, some largely aspirational. The climate change government policy is now much more directed, concentrating on energy reduction, energy efficiency and carbon reduction. There are many organisations in the field and a large range of information and advice available. Under the general banner of sustainability" there are probably up to 100 organisations offering advice, products and services. What is often lacking however is an easy to use directory service to point the public to specific advice.
- 6.2 There is little need to replicate or micro-manage what already exists in terms of services provided by others, but there is a need, perhaps with partners, to have in place an information and communications policy on this matter. Consideration will need to be given to this issue, especially in relation to Council web site content. It will be necessary to think in terms of the direction of council policy, its application and tone, in terms of supporting and reinforcing the climate change message at all levels in a number of ways through the Communications Group.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The report outlines the direction of travel for climate change actions and indicates that the Council's major contribution rests on community leadership and organisational self-help as an exemplar for the rest of the community. Large scale expenditure, apart from the capital cost of the Carbon Trust programme of £300k over 2007/08 and 2008/9 fiscal years, is not required at this stage. The draft capital programme includes £100k for 2008/09 (at 01.12.06), which is subject to Council agreement.

8.0 Human Resource Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct Human Resource implications to this report but it is worth signalling that a robust climate change strategy is bound to have an impact on certain posts and on the operational and cultural approach to some work issues.

9.0 Community and Environmental Implications

- 9.1 The whole tenure of the Government White Paper on Climate Change is directed to action being taken at the appropriate level across the international and national boundaries to protect the environment. The very grave dangers emanating from climate change have severe implications for our community which needs to act decisively at both the individual and collective level. It is difficult to conceive of a report that raises more important community and environmental issues. The hard work put into community and partnership arrangements by this Council over the past few years should aid the principle of joint effort and enterprise. Links to the Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreements will need to be reinforced.

10.0 Diversity and Equality Issues

- 10.1 Changes in economic matters and major life style issues, tend to have a disproportionately large effect on the less advantaged and more vulnerable members of society. Extreme temperature changes for example, tend to affect certain groups

more than others. It will be important to have the Council's equality and diversity policies on these issues firmly in mind when new policies and strategies are created.

11.0 Other Implications

11.1 The formation of a Climate Change Strategy will undoubtedly affect both the organisational and behavioural cultural of the Council. Apart from the creation of an action plan which will have practical implications for the delivery of services at all levels, it will mean that the Council will be shaping many aspects of its work to meet the demands of climate change policies. Some of these necessary changes will be significant both in the way work is organised and delivered, and in the relationships with the community and partners.

12.0 Risk Analysis

12.1 The risk of not formulating a climate change strategy and a project plan for implementation, will mean that the Council would not be playing a full role in the urgent need to tackle global warming. In community, business and public terms, not having a positive and communicated strategy would send the wrong signals and possibly lead to some criticism.

12.2.1 There are risks to having an innovative and radical climate change strategy, as, judged by some public reactions, there will be sectors of the public who will continue to reject the current scientific evidence. However, if the serious problems are to be tackled in a systematic and determined manner, the risks of not doing anything appear to be outweighed by the need to take lasting and positive action.

12.3 The Government White Paper clearly indicates that local authorities will be assessed on progress made on climate change within their own communities through the existing performance management framework.

Appendices:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Background Documents used in the preparation of this report:	<p>The Government Report on Climate Change 2006, The Stern Review 2006, The Carbon Trust Three Stage guide 2006, The Energy Saving Trust Community Case Studies 2003-2006, Local Government Acc - Sustainable Energy and Climate Change 2004, Friends of the Earth – Climate Solutions in Action 2006, DTI - Our Energy Challenge - 2006. Croners Environmental Management Database. Jonathon Porritt visit.</p>

Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nottingham Agreement 	Executive Committee November 2006	E89