

Report

Subject : Climate Change Project
Report to : The Cabinet
Date : Wednesday 25 March 2009
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Leader of the Cabinet: Councillor Paul Sample

1. SUMMARY:

- 1.1 The Council's corporate priorities include working to help tackle climate change. The Council commissioned a project to assess current community and voluntary sector activity in relation to climate change and the environment, within South Wiltshire. The aim was to identify opportunities for strengthening voluntary and community sector capacity, as well as any specific proposals for tackling climate change. This report summarises the findings of the project.

2. BACKGROUND:

National Policy Context

- 2.1 It is now widely recognised that one of the greatest challenges facing both national and local government is that posed by climate change and the threat of global warming. Increasingly the impact of climate change is being felt across the U.K. economy and society. The Government has put in place climate change legislation that has important consequences for the delivery of local services.
- 2.2 The mantra "Think Global – Act Local" has become embedded in the strategies of not just central and regional government, but local authorities as well. The need for local government to engage intensively is core to the issue of combating climate change and central to the success of this engagement is work with local communities.

Assessing Activity in the Voluntary & Community Sector

- 2.3 A questionnaire was sent to a variety of community and voluntary organisations, schools and individuals, to identify current practices and highlight any gaps. Sixty nine responses were returned - fourteen from individuals and fifty five from organisations.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



- 2.4 This was supplemented with a workshop, aimed at identifying priorities for the future. The priorities that came out of the workshops were:
- renewable energy – including re-establishing micro-hydro power generation in Salisbury
 - affordable local food
 - affordable public transport and better cycling networks/ travel plans
 - education and awareness-raising through schools
 - energy efficient measures in buildings
 - promoting and expanding the Wiltshire Scrapstore
 - increasing awareness of available funding
 - involving businesses
 - better communication of how and what to recycle
- 2.5 58% of the respondents also indicated they would like to be involved in a South Wiltshire partnership with other organisations to tackle climate change. The creation of a partnership would provide a mechanism for: more effectively co-ordinating activity; lobbying the statutory agencies for support; sharing information; developing projects across groups and sectors.

The Potential for Micro-Hydro Power in Salisbury

- 2.6 There was also substantial support for further consideration of the potential for micro-hydro power in Salisbury. The number of rivers in Salisbury City centre offers a tempting opportunity to develop small-scale hydro electric generation system in or near Salisbury. Unlike wind or solar power, small-scale hydro is reasonably constant and predictable, making it an attractive option for areas with suitable river resources.
- 2.7 The Government's policy to move the electricity market towards a more low-carbon state is set out in the Renewables Obligation. Each electricity retailer is obliged to obtain a certain percentage of its electricity from renewable sources. This is managed by the awarding, trading and submission of Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROCs).
- 2.8 A preliminary search has found that no viability study has been done on any of the rivers around Salisbury. While a full survey of the length of all the rivers within the boundaries of Salisbury was beyond the scope of this initial study, it included two sites that offer particular potential. In summary:
- The ***Bishops Mill on the Avon***, has the potential to generate approximately 143,000 kWh of electricity per year, equating to a reduction in CO₂ emissions of seventy one tonnes and a yearly cash value of c£13,000.
 - The ***Old Mill on the Nadder***, has the potential to generate approximately 31,000 kWh of electricity per year, equating to a reduction in CO₂ emissions of fifteen tonnes and a cash value of £3,000 per annum.
- 2.9 It should be noted that the retail value of electricity is generally higher than this, so greater savings are possible if the electricity is used by the Council directly, thereby offsetting the need to pay retail price for electricity from the grid.

Investment Requirements & Payback

- 2.10 Without detailed knowledge of the structures at the Mill sites, accurate installation costs are difficult to estimate. Scaling from figures available through the British Hydro Association, costs for a 40kW system on the Avon (including equipment, works and grid connection) may be in the region of £50,000, with installation on the Nadder in the region of £20,000.
- 2.11 There might be opportunities to attract external funding. Depending upon the structure developed to deliver the development, low interest loans may be available from the Carbon Trust and Salix, an independent company who aim to accelerate public sector organisations

involvement in energy efficiency projects and who work with the Carbon Trust by providing support to public bodies bringing forward “invest to save” proposals.

- 2.12 Assuming a requirement to fund the full capital costs and pure market-value income, the payback time for an Avon installation, as estimated by this initial study, may be as short as five years. The smaller size of the Nadder system means that its payback is likely to be longer – around ten years.

Other Issues

- 2.13 The installation of hydropower on a river does raise several issues which need to be addressed, especially with the Environment Agency (EA). Any modification of weirs may result in the loss of flood controls and whilst at this stage this is not seen as a major issue the EA would need to be consulted.
- 2.14 Any disruption of the natural flow of a river can effect biodiversity and disturb habitat. The two sites discussed have already been extensively modified by human behaviour, but the potential effect of any modification on wildlife adapted to live in their current states should be considered (e.g. fish shield on any intakes).

3. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is asked to comment on this report and:

- 3.1 recommend to Wiltshire Council that they consider supporting the creation of a Climate Change Partnership for South Wiltshire
- 3.2 recommend to Wiltshire Council and Salisbury City Council that they consider supporting further work on a detailed assessment of micro-hydro power in Salisbury

4. IMPLICATIONS:

Financial: There are no additional resource implications for this project as the budget has already been allocated and the outcomes will be delivered within the existing allocation.

Council's Core Values: The recommendations made are in line with the Council's own policies and goals on sustainable development and its commitment to reduce CO₂ emissions.

Wards Affected: City