

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

2 September 2014

Briefing on Climate Local and Wiltshire Council Activity on Climate Change

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Environment Select Committee with:
 - (i) a briefing on the Climate Local Initiative and recommended action plan to be presented to Cabinet on 16 September 2014 (**Appendix 1**).
 - (ii) a review of progress since the council became a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on climate change in 2009.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. 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.
3. 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.

Overview

4. 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.
5. 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. At its meeting on 16 September 2014, Cabinet will be recommended to sign up to Climate Local and publish the action plan at **Appendix 1** on its website.

6. 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.
7. The council aims to reduce its annual carbon footprint by 11,823 tCO₂ 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.
8. 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 CO₂ 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.
9. 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.

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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**).
13. According to government data, Wiltshire's per capita carbon emissions have fallen from 8 tonnes of carbon dioxide (tCO₂) in 2005 to 6.7 tCO₂ in 2012. This reflects a reduction in emissions nationally, but remains higher than the 2012 South West average of 6.1tCO₂ and national average of 6.2 tCO₂. 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

14. Under the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) scheme, in April 2010 the council became liable to pay £12 for every tonne of CO₂ 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 CO₂ emitted.
15. 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.
16. 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.
17. 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.

18. 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.
19. 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.

Proposal

20. That Environment Select Committee notes the report.

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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