

Climate Change Strategy

Executive Summary

This report sets out the initial draft of the first Climate Change Strategy for Wiltshire following the report presented in July 2010 outlining the Council's approach.

Proposal

That the Committee:

Comments on the draft Climate Change Strategy prior to consideration by the Climate Change Board on 20 September 2010.

Reason for Proposal

The Committee requested in July 2010 that a draft Climate Change Strategy be developed following a discussion of the approach to be taken.

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Service Director, Economy and Enterprise

Climate Change Strategy

Purpose of Report

1. That the Committee comments on the draft Climate Change Strategy prior to consideration by the Climate Change Board on 20 September 2010.

Background

2. Briefings on progress against the Council's climate change objectives were provided to Members of the Select Committee on 3 November 2009, 2 March 2010 and 6 July 2010. Members requested that a draft strategy be developed for discussion at their meeting of 7 September 2010.
3. This is the first draft of the Climate Change Strategy which will need to be subject to further refinement, consultation and development. The Climate Change Board will consider the strategy at its meeting on 20 September 2010 before consultation is carried out with stakeholders in the autumn through the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance. The strategy will be presented to Cabinet by the end of 2010.

Main Considerations for the Committee

4. The scope of the draft strategy includes both council services and Wiltshire as a whole in relation to those aspects of Wiltshire life that the council can influence (e.g. planning, transport, flood management, community engagement).
5. The strategy sets out:
 - where we are now in 2010,
 - where we want to get to,
 - our general approach for how we are going to get there.
6. The strategy, as set out at **Appendix 1**, is a framework document which will be linked to related council strategies to ensure climate change 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 this is the first time that a Climate Change Strategy has been prepared, it is expected that the strategy will be reviewed and refined as further work is carried out on the action plans.

7. As a minimum we will produce the following four action plans by the end of 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
8. The Committee will be aware that the Council worked with the Carbon Trust during 2009/10 to develop a Carbon Management Plan. A draft plan was considered by the Climate Change Board in March 2010. The Board considered that accurate carbon emissions data for the first year of the Council's operations needed to be included before the Plan could be adopted and accurate targets set. The plan is therefore being updated with the baseline data for 2009/10 and a presentation will be delivered to the Select Committee on 7 September 2010 setting out progress in developing the plan.
9. Work on the Climate Change Adaptation Plan is currently on-going and the Council will have a final action plan by end of March 2011.
10. The Council is working with the Energy Saving Trust (EST) through the 'one to one' programme on a Low Carbon Transition Plan for the county.
11. The Committee will be aware that the Council has commissioned a climate change and renewable energy evidence base study. This is designed to principally fulfil the requirements of the Climate Change Supplement to PPS 1 or its successor. The study is collecting data on current and future energy use in the county; assessing the supply of low carbon and zero carbon sources of energy; and making policy and target recommendations for incorporating in the Local Development Framework. This study will inform the development of a Renewable Energy Strategy for Wiltshire.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

12. Implementation of the strategy will have a positive impact on the environment as it aims to reduce carbon emissions and prepare for climate change.

Equality and Diversity Impact of the Proposal

13. The Council's climate change programme will have a positive impact on equalities and diversity as the implications of climate change will be disproportionate for those that are disadvantaged.

Risk Assessment

14. Meeting the Council's obligations in relation to climate change requires the delivery of a complex programme of work which has a range of risks attached to it:
15. Organisational buy-in:
 - Resistance to behaviour and policy changes required for successful carbon reduction.

16. Financial:

- Insufficient investment available for energy efficiency measures to ensure achievement of the Council's carbon reduction target, meaning that efficiencies in energy and transport costs (total spend £15 million in 2009/10) are not realised.
- Failure to perform well under the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC), for example, by lack of investment in smart meters and energy efficiency projects, which could lead to financial penalties.
- Carbon trading strategy unsuccessful leading to increased costs of purchasing carbon allowances on the secondary market.

17. Legal:

- Failure to demonstrate compliance with environmental legislation if an environmental management system is not implemented in high risk areas.

18. Service delivery:

- Climate change impacts in Wiltshire (e.g. increasing temperatures and flooding) will have an impact on the Council's ability to deliver services and could adversely affect Wiltshire residents unless appropriate measures are put in place.

19. Performance:

- Failure to achieve NI 188 target in the Wiltshire Local Area Agreement.
- Failure to achieve good performance against the other three national performance indicators that measure to what extent the Council has reduced its own carbon footprint (NI 185) and the carbon footprint of its local area (NI 186) as well as fuel poverty in its local area (NI 187).

20. Reputation:

- Residents expect the Council to lead by example in reducing carbon emissions and preparing for unavoidable climate change. The November 2007 People's Voice Survey responses show that panellists want Wiltshire Council to take the lead in addressing climate change and support them individually to tackle climate change.
- The Wiltshire Assembly has identified climate change as being one of three top priorities to be addressed.
- Should the Council's trading strategy for purchasing carbon allowances under CRC not be successful, it could be in a position where it needs to purchase allowances from private sector competitors.

Financial Implications

21. The financial implications of implementing the climate change programme were set out in the report to Cabinet of 22 June 2010. The accompanying Carbon Management Plan sets out the financial implications of participation in the Carbon Reduction Commitment carbon trading scheme.

Legal Implications

22. Section 1.5 of the draft strategy sets out the legal and policy framework for the Council's climate change obligations. The report to Cabinet dated 22 June 2010 set these out in more detail.

Options Considered

23. Doing nothing is not an option as the Council is obliged to comply with legal and performance requirements relating to the environment and climate change.

Conclusions

24. Through the implementation of the Climate Change Strategy and its associated action plans, the Council will have a comprehensive programme to ensure it meets its climate change responsibilities.

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

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Draft Climate Change Strategy