

Report to Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Standing Panel

Date of meeting: 6 January 2011

Subject: Half Yearly Report on Climate Change Strategy

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Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry



Recommendation:

To note the progress against declaration pledges
(pledges in bold; comments underneath)

- 1. Work with central government to contribute, at a local level, to the delivery of the UK Climate Change Programme, the Kyoto Protocol and the target for carbon dioxide reduction by 2010.**

The Council signed up to the 10:10 initiative and managed a 4.1 % reduction in the 10:10 Action Year, which was 2009/2010. Although positive that we achieved something, this is below the 10% target we signed up for.

- 2. Participate in local and regional networks for support.**

Environmental Co-ordinator attends and reports to Essex CORE meetings (made up of energy officers within Essex, run by ECC) and works on projects with other authorities through this group.

- 3. Within the next 2 years develop plans with our partners and local communities to progressively address the causes and the impacts of climate change, according to our local priorities, securing maximum benefit for our communities.**
 - Assess the risk associated with climate change and the implications for our services and our communities of climate change impacts and adapt accordingly.**
 - Encourage all sectors in our local community to take the opportunity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions and to make public their commitment to action.**

Although this pledge relates to 2008 and 2009, the Environmental Co-ordinator continues this work, for example by:

- Working with ECC, the Emergency Planner and all Directorates to identify the greatest risks to service posed by severe weather and to warn and inform members of the public under adaptation related aspects of the Civil Contingencies Act.
- Working with the Herts and Essex Energy partnership to promote grants to private homeowners to try to eradicate fuel poverty in the district and reduce emissions from domestic sources by distribution of leaflets, articles, press releases, advertisements using screens in reception, mail outs and attendance at Council events and community days; these are hopefully raising awareness of the money available to residents to make improvements to their homes.

- Raising public awareness on energy efficiency and natural resource use, adapting to severe weather events and promoting community resilience by running stalls at events in collaboration with the Emergency Planner, such as flood awareness days, community days and emergency services events. Giving talks to volunteer groups such as Brownies and Guides.
4. **Publically declare, within appropriate plans and strategies, the commitment to achieve a significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from our own authority's operations, especially energy sourcing and use, travel and transport, waste production and disposal and the purchasing of goods and services.**
- **Monitor the progress of our plans against the actions needed and publish the results.**

As per the previous update given on the Climate Change Strategy, not only has our commitment to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions not been sufficiently identified or quantified, there is consistent low level commitment to the actions outlined in the Strategy throughout the Council because there was previously no monitoring procedure in place to ensure actions were completed. Therefore, the Climate Change Strategy is in the process of being rewritten with a view to being more specific about the percentage reduction the Council aims to make from all operations and ensuring that responsible officers are identified corporately to drive the aims of the strategy together.

In the meantime, work is ongoing to try to reduce emissions from operations such as:

(a) Travel and Transport – Following the recommendation of Energy Saving Trust Green Fleet Review, as carried out in 2009, Smarter Driving lessons have been organised for Council employees. Despite offering training for free, of the 500 or so staff members that drive at EFDC, so far only 16 have agreed to undertake smarter driving training, which will help participants to understand how to save fuel by driving in a fuel economic way. Further recommendations within the Green Fleet Review require funding, which will depend on the fleet management priorities of individual Directorates.

(b) Energy Sourcing and use - In November 2010 a report passed through the Cabinet Agenda Planning Group for the provision of a small solar panel system on the roof of a Council owned building as per the recommendations outlined in a feasibility survey of several buildings. Despite a predicted return on investment of around 6.94% and a guaranteed 25 year lifespan of payments to the Council at a guaranteed and continuous rate through the Government's Feed in Tariff, it was decided at the Pre-Cabinet meeting that the £30,000 would better be spent on work to the Civic Offices that was completed before the meeting took place.

The report will be amended to highlight the benefits of integrating solar panels into the redevelopment of premises at Brooker Road intended for occupation by part of the Museum and by Countrycare, and will be resubmitted at a later date. The Facilities Management Work Programme also identifies some budget for the provision of renewable energy on the Condor Building in 2011/2012. However, by then the rates paid under the Feed in Tariff will have dramatically decreased, considerably prolonging the payback period of a solar panel system and reducing the return on investment to a minimal amount.

Smaller measures around the Civic Offices are being pursued such as the installation of Smart meters and extra roof insulation, however, there is a strong need to begin energy auditing of Council buildings other than the Civic Offices.

Waste Production and Disposal

5. The new Climate Change Strategy will highlight changes that need to be made when the time comes for the Council to renew its commercial waste contract. A weakness identified by the Audit Commission Use of Natural Resources KLOE was that the Council

currently has no certainty of where its own commercial waste goes once it is removed from the compacter by Porter's Waste Management and no contract condition or legislation requires them to provide us with this information. A new aim will be to have this clearly outlined in any new contracts.

6. In contrast, the collection and disposal of household waste and the provision of recycle sites for items that cannot be collected at the kerbside is very good. It is also well publicised on the EFDC website how many of the items are processed once they have been collected.

Report on Climate Change Strategy

7. As mentioned above, the Climate Change Strategy is being rewritten by the Environmental Co-ordinator. A sub-group meeting took place on November 18th with 2 other members of the GCWP. Structure and overarching themes of the new strategy decided, but waiting for clearer steer from DECC on the direction of new indicator set, so that these can be incorporated into the Council's aims within the new strategy. Further report to follow at next half-yearly report.