

## Statement regarding the Carbon Management Plan 2009-14

It is highly commendable that the Carbon Management Plan 2009-14 (CMP) has set a target of a 30% cut in carbon emissions by 2014 from 2007/08 levels. This will be a challenge. It is also highly commendable that the council has been working with the Carbon Trust, and will use this learning to support partners to reduce emissions of carbon.

However, this plan does not grasp the nettle, it is inadequate in addressing the issues, and is failing future generations – our children.

### The Imperative

The CMP refers to The Local Government Association's Climate Change Commission's December 2007 report. I have pulled out the commission's core message here, which paints a considerably more serious problem than the snippets of this report presented in the CMP.

#### ***the climate change imperative***

*Tackling climate change must be at the centre of local government's vision for their communities. It is not another priority amongst the many that compete for local government leaders' attention. It is now clear from the scientific evidence that it is the single priority which overrides all others, now and for the foreseeable future.*

*The prime minister, Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP, set out the challenge recently when he said: "our mission is, in truth, historic and world changing – to build over the next fifty years and beyond, a global low carbon economy. And it is not overdramatic to say that the character and course of the coming century will be set by how we measure up to this challenge."*

*There is a political consensus on the need for action. The Rt Hon David Cameron MP, leader of the Opposition, has said: "The long-term nature of the climate change challenge demands a framework and disciplines that no government, of any political colour, will ever be able to fudge".*

*And Chris Huhne MP, Liberal Democrat shadow environment secretary, has said: "We are stealing the future from our children and grandchildren, and it is imperative that we put our own behaviour on a sustainable footing."*

*Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP, then secretary of state for communities and local government, set out the local government role: "**local government can have a massive impact on climate change...we are putting our trust in local authorities** to have the expertise and leadership to deal with big policy challenges...local government must demonstrate it is ready and willing to take leadership of these issues without being told what to do and how to do it."*

***Community leadership on climate change is a moral imperative** – to mitigate the most serious threat to our communities, for today's young people and their children, and the world's poorest countries – those that face the greatest risk from climate change. Local government has a moral obligation to protect those people in lower-income households who are currently most exposed to the risks of extreme weather events. If we do not stabilise emissions within eight years, we risk unpredictable climate change and with it, catastrophic consequences for our communities and communities across the globe.*

I do not see these ideals in this CMP.

Since this report was written, further data collected by scientists is evidencing a worsening situation.

There is a great urgency in reducing the amount of greenhouse gases that we emit. Scientists have long been warning that a rise in global temperature over 2° C would lead to unstoppable warming. So far it has risen by 0.75° C. In 2007 the level of atmospheric carbon dioxide rose 2.14ppm to 387ppm. The rate of increase in carbon dioxide levels has risen from an average of 1.5ppm between 1970 and 2000 to 2.1ppm since 2000. **The rate of increase is increasing.**

In April 2008 scientists estimated that the sensitivity of the climate to the heat trapping abilities of greenhouse gases is twice that of previous work (the 2007 IPCC Assessment), and that atmospheric carbon dioxide must be stabilised at 350ppm – ie **lower than existing levels, and will require removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.**

If we are to protect the futures of our children, and curtail the human catastrophes that are already happening across the world because of climate change, there is a **great urgency in reducing** the amount of greenhouse gases that we emit. B&NES must make this the first priority in all its business. Wherever and whenever B&NES can influence events B&NES must work urgently to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. All internal departments must have this as their first priority. All funding provided by B&NES must have reducing emissions of greenhouse gases at least in line with government targets as a key performance indicator. All contractors and partners must be required to evidence their reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases. All planning decisions must be made on the basis of reducing, so far as is practicable, greenhouse gas emissions. B&NES must urgently seek and install alternative renewable energy sources – I understand this process has been started, but the emphasis must be on URGENCY. B&NES must gain the support for this strategy by proactively taking the issues to the residents of B&NES, in the way that it has done for instance on the Bath package/BRT.

**It will require a wholesale change to the way we live, work and travel.** Our children are relying on us – and on **you** on the 4<sup>th</sup> March to actually put in process action that will make a significant difference. As it stands the CMP is not sufficient.

## Targets

The baseline figure for B&NES's emissions for 2007/08 is 26.5kt CO<sub>2</sub>. The stated target is to reduce this by 8kt by 2014. According to DEFRA, the emissions for the whole area of B&NES in 2006 was 1,072kt CO<sub>2</sub> (figures for 2007 are not available yet). Therefore the target for reductions in the B&NES area is not a 30% but a 0.75% reduction by 2014. This is shameful. You will have read in the newspapers and seen on television the outcome of doing nothing – and a reduction of 0.75% is “doing nothing”.

There are several National Indicators that concern the environment, as follows:

- [NI 185 - Percentage CO2 reduction from LA operations](#)
- [NI 186 – Per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area](#)
- [NI 187 - Tackling fuel poverty - % of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low and high energy efficiency rating](#)
- [NI 188 – Planning to Adapt to Climate Change](#)
- [NI 189 - Flood and coastal erosion risk management](#)
- [NI 190 - Achievement in meeting standards for the control system for animal health](#)

- [NI 191 - Residual household waste per household](#)
- [NI 192 - Household waste reused, recycled and composted](#)
- [NI 193 - Municipal waste land filled](#)
- [NI194 - Air quality - % reduction in NOx and primary PM10 emissions through local authority's estate and operations](#)
- [NI 195 - Improved street and environmental cleanliness \(levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting\)](#)
- [NI 196 - Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping](#)
- [NI 197 - Improved Local Biodiversity – proportion of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented](#)

NI 185 is concerned only with emissions from the Council's operations. NI 186 is concerned with all operations within the geographical area of B&NES. There is a big difference. Within the Local Area Agreement, B&NES has selected only NI 185 and NI 191 as priority indicators. **What you must do on the 4<sup>th</sup> March is add NI 186, NI 192 and NI 193.** It is obvious why NI 186 is vital if we are to achieve a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions overall – and NI192 and 193 are also important because of the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> and methane emitted by waste. Methane has a much greater effect than CO<sub>2</sub>. Not only must these indicators be included in the LAA, but ALL contracts that the LAA administers must contain these three indicators, and all partners/agencies/suppliers/contractors must be made accountable for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at least in line with the Climate Change Act 2008.

It is not enough "*to put you own house in order*" before taking on the bigger picture. We do not have the time.

The CMP makes the claim that "*Tackling climate change is a key crosscutting theme of our Local Area Agreement, with NI 185 one of our priority indicators.*" These are nice words, but with only NI185 in place, they are hollow words. For these words to be true the LAA must have the additional three NIs above, and every contract must include associated targets – that is what is meant by a "*crosscutting theme*".

Unfortunately even NI 186 is not enough. If we are to accept that the population of B&NES is to increase it is the absolute amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that becomes important. We must see 4% year on year reductions on the 1,072kt CO<sub>2</sub> for the B&NES area to hit the 80% reduction by 2050. This really is going to take wholesale change to the way we live, work and travel. This is the sort of topic the Carbon Management Group should be considering. The fundamental building blocks of the Core Strategy need to be reconsidered in the light of the increasing urgency to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and reducing emissions must take priority over the "growth agenda".

The people who are going to be affected by your actions are you/us and future generations - our children. You have had spelled out to you in a multitude of scientific reports the consequences of not dramatically and urgently reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Are you going to tell your children that a reduction of 0.75% by 2014 is enough, despite all the evidence to the contrary? Or are you going to tell your children that you made reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions your first and overriding priority, and did your best to ensure they had a world to live in?

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27<sup>th</sup> February 2009