

## ***Planning Transportation Economy and Sustainability Panel***

### **Climate Change Review**

#### ***Introduction***

The Planning, Transportation, Economy & Sustainability Panel is undertaking a review looking at the move to bring climate change to the heart of the Bath & North East Somerset's Sustainability agenda.

Climate Change is now recognised as the greatest threat to human societies and life on earth and the greatest challenge facing those in power at all levels: international, national, regional and local.

In response to the rising importance of this issue for the local Community the Panel would like to investigate ways in which the Council can meet its carbon emission reduction targets. They will do this by looking at what can be done in managing energy usage in buildings and also by examining how effective wider Council policies are at contributing to carbon emission reduction aspirations.

#### ***Background***

The climate change debate is moving to the heart of the Council's sustainability agenda, with reducing carbon emissions through sustainable energy solutions becoming the top priority.

This is in line with the Government's climate change agenda, which cites that the biggest changes will come from what happens at Local Government level. Currently there are not specific targets or tools being presented as guidelines for Local Authorities, however, it is recognised that climate change initiatives will be a key line of enquiry in the next round of CPA assessment. The governments Energy Policy is also set to be renewed later this year and will have implications for local councils.

In Bath & North East Somerset Council there is currently no Corporate Improvement Priority that gives precedence to climate change issues, although the Corporate Sustainability Manager is currently rewriting the Council's position statement on sustainability and is building a strategic framework concentrating on

- Buildings
- Transport
- Zero Waste
- Food

In December 2005 the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive signed the Nottingham Declaration, committing the Council 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."*

Among other commitments, the Council pledged to act as a community leader in encouraging all sectors of the local community to follow suit. In signing this declaration Bath & North East Somerset has acknowledged that to do nothing is not an option, that action is needed to make improvements to the environment.

Early in 2006 the Council together with its partners on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)'s were successful in securing government invest-to-save funding of £770,000 to cut energy consumption. The aim of the project is to cut energy consumption for

participating members of the LSP by at least 10 per cent over the next three years. It could save an estimated £4.7 million between now and 2012.

The Government has set itself targets of 20 per cent carbon emission reduction by 2010 rising to a 60 per cent reduction by the year 2050. Locally, targets of a 10 per cent reduction as a result of the invest to save project are likely to be achieved through better energy management, though beyond this the Council is yet to agree targets for the longer term.

### **Review Objective**

This review will set out to...

- Examine how well Council policy is contributing to the aims of the Climate Change initiative and the Nottingham Declaration targets
- Look into ways that the Council can reduce carbon emissions by managing energy usage in its own buildings and those of new developments.
- Look beyond 2009 and make recommendations as to the carbon emissions reduction targets that the Council should be aiming at in the longer term.

### **Scope**

- In examining how well Council policy is contributing to the aims of the Climate Change initiative and the Nottingham Declaration targets the Panel will
  - Identify which Council policies have a potentially large effect on the local environment and carbon emissions
  - Identify whether the effect of each policy contributes to increasing or decreasing carbon emissions within the authority
  - Identify ways in which Council policies can be altered to come into alignment with the Climate Change agenda and the targets that have been signed up to in the Nottingham declaration.
- Look into ways that the Council can improve the efficiency of energy usage in its own buildings and those of new developments.
  - Investigate best practice in the area of energy efficiencies in buildings
  - Investigate the potential of setting up an Energy Services company
  - Identify ways in which the council can manage energy usage in its own buildings in a way that will reduce carbon emissions
  - Identify ways in which the Council can encourage other large building operators in the city to manage their energy consumption more efficiently.
- Look beyond 2009 and make recommendations as to the carbon emissions reduction targets that the Council should be aiming at in the longer term
  - Look at how other Local Authorities are setting their targets

### **Excluded from Investigation**

The Panel have chosen not to look at Climate Change initiatives in relation to the following areas unless they are included as part of their wider look at the effect of Council policy on reducing carbon emissions.

- Zero waste
- Food
- Transportation

## **Approach**

In order to gather their evidence the panel will undertake the following activities during the course of the review

1. Hold an initial briefing for the panel on
  - the issues surrounding carbon emissions and climate change
  - What the Government agenda is
  - What the Council is doing currently
  - Specific information about energy efficiencies in buildings
2. Investigate what Beacon Council's are doing
  - In setting and meeting local targets for Carbon emission reduction
  - In improving the energy efficiency of their buildings
  - In the area of zero carbon initiatives and renewable energy usage
3. Look into the possibility of a Panel visit to an exemplar neighbouring authority
4. Hold a contributor session to
  - talk to Council services about the contribution of their policies to the Council's climate change commitments
  - talk to Experts in the field of climate change and zero carbon initiatives
  - Interview sustainable energy providers as to the possibilities available for renewable energy.
  - Ensure that the Council has in place appropriate Planning Policy which would help to promote renewable energy.
5. Hold a workshop joint with the CSE to focus on the benefits and practicalities of setting up an energy services company.

## **Draft Timescales**

*Detail to be confirmed*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Type</b>
24 <sup>th</sup> April 06	Public panel Meeting – Draft Terms of Reference presented, Steering group formed	Public Panel Meeting
26 <sup>th</sup> May 06	Steering Group Meeting to discuss details of scope and activities, including timescales of the review.	Private Meeting
June	Press Release	Press release
June	Questionnaires distributed	Questionnaire
10 <sup>th</sup> July	AM - CSE Workshop for Panel PM - Public Contributors Session	Public panel Meeting & Private morning session
17 <sup>th</sup> July	Wash-Up Session	Private Meeting
? <sup>th</sup> July	<i>Possible Visit to Exemplar LA (if needed)</i>	<i>Private Visit</i>
11 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Present Report to Panel	Public Panel Meeting

## **Project Team**

Cllr David Dixon  
Cllr Stephen Willcox  
Jane Wildblood – Corporate Sustainability Manager  
Overview & Scrutiny Project Officer – Bethan Grant