

# Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING	<b>Communities, Transport and Environment</b> <b>Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>	
MEETING DATE:	<b>16<sup>th</sup> November 2015</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: N/a
TITLE:	<b>Climate Change: progress, opportunities, challenges</b>	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> N/a		

## 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 To provide a progress update on the Council's work to tackle climate change and achieve carbon reduction, including its community leadership role through the Bath & North East Somerset Environmental Sustainability Partnership (ESP), noting the current policy context, opportunities and challenges. This report provides an outline which will be expanded upon through a presentation at the Panel meeting.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the progress made against the B&NES Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy, the Core Strategy and corporate targets, noting in particular some of the excellent, award-winning projects highlighted.
- 2.2 To note the current policy context, challenges and opportunities for further delivery in B&NES over the next few years.
- 2.3 To continue to support the work of the Environmental Sustainability Partnership to enable implementation and the delivery of further community and corporate co-benefits.

## 3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 Costs of continuing support to the ESP are managed within existing budgets and efficiency savings identified through initiatives are built into budgets moving forward.
- 3.2 Opportunities & challenges are each financially assessed as required.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 put in place binding national carbon reduction targets to decrease carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. Local authorities are expected to perform a community leadership role to enable local communities to contribute to this target.
- 4.2 Local authorities also have a range of duties and powers to improve health and reduce inequality. In particular, the Housing Act 2004 places a duty on councils to address 'cold hazards' in homes, the impact of which have been estimated to cost around £3.8m pa to local health services.

## **5 THE REPORT**

### **Progress**

- 5.1 The B&NES Environmental Sustainability Partnership, established in 2010, oversees work on climate change across all sectors in B&NES through enabling reductions in carbon emissions and a shift towards a low carbon economy, whilst maximising community resilience, health & well-being and local economic benefits.
- 5.2 Since 2010, good progress has been made across the range of ESP themes, particularly in domestic energy efficiency, public sector energy efficiency and renewable energy installation, community renewable energy strategy and delivery and, most recently, local food strategy & partnership development.
- 5.3 Carbon emissions have reduced by 22% since 2005, against the ESP community target of 45% by 2029 (which is in line with the national carbon reduction targets referred to above).
- 5.4 Highlights include:
  - The award-winning Keynsham Civic Centre - cutting carbon/energy use by 90% and saving the authority £140k pa on energy bills and representing a national first for public sector buildings;
  - Bath & West Community Energy (BWCE) Cooperation Agreement – enabling solar roof installation on 6 local schools, plus other 'community energy' projects leading to 7.3MWe installed capacity and awards for both BWCE and the Council;
  - The LED Street-lighting Replacement Programme – another national first that is saving Council £250k pa;
  - The establishment of the B&NES Energy at Home scheme - winning £800k from the Green Deal Communities Fund (Department of Energy & Climate Change) to provide top-up grants to local householders, including the fuel poor, to enable energy efficiency improvement. To date, almost half of this

fund is either spent, committed to agreed household projects or allocated to those in the pipeline.

## **Policy & Market Context**

- 5.5 Changes to the government's Green Deal scheme have caused uncertainty in the market. The consequent Bonfield Review of home energy efficiency is due to report in March 2016 and energy efficiency is a stated DECC priority, particularly for the fuel poor, and it is expected that the review will recommend a greater role for local authorities.
- 5.6 Changes to renewable energy market incentive schemes from January 2016, have also caused market instability and debate about the likely impact. The Council has a particular concern about the impact on 'community energy', which brings proven community benefits through share ownership and income for community schemes such as rural broadband. The Council has participated in the government consultation.
- 5.7 New entrants to the energy market, challenging the Big 6, are opening up potential opportunities for local authorities and community organisations to enable greater local control of energy services.
- 5.8 These changes are currently having a less negative impact in B&NES than has been reported in some other places. We think our resilience is due to a number of factors, such as:
- The ESP's scope and membership enables a strong and flexible approach to change;
  - The Energy at Home project provides a relatively robust model to respond to market developments and provide good quality customer service;
  - Our research into 'energy services', plus the local track record in community energy project delivery, is enabling us to identify the right approach to developing energy services for B&NES.

## **Opportunities & Challenges**

- 5.9 The B&NES Energy at Home scheme puts us in a good position to exploit opportunities that arise as a result of the government's Bonfield Review.
- 5.10 Enabling further 'community energy' projects is challenging in the current climate, but there are fresh market opportunities and technology developments that provide new opportunities to deliver better energy services to local residents.
- 5.11 The recent development of the B&NES Local Food Partnership & Strategy is helping to create new opportunities to take local action on food.
- 5.12 Whilst local action to increase flood protection is good, it is proving more difficult to make a business case for investment in other climate change adaptation measures that could increase local resilience to inevitable climate changes.

## **6 RATIONALE**

6.1 It is estimated that the actions of local authorities, their partners and communities can affect around 50% of carbon emissions, with the rest requiring action at national level. The Council's approach has demonstrated that appropriate community leadership is having a real impact on local carbon emissions.

## 7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The ESP Board positively received a similar report on progress and the strategic approach to environmental sustainability and climate change at its last meeting on 13 October. The Board is chaired by Cllr Martin Veal and has cross-party member representation, as well as senior officers from the Council and a range of partners in the community.

7.2 Cllr Martin Veal and Andrew Pate have been consulted on the report and presentation.

## 8 RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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<b>Background papers</b>	The ESP Strategy can be found: <a href="http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/neighbourhoods-and-community-safety/working-partnership/environmental-sustainability-partne">http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/neighbourhoods-and-community-safety/working-partnership/environmental-sustainability-partne</a>
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