

Executive

The Council's Response to Climate Change

1 March 2010

Report of Head of Environmental Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report considers the progress of the Environmental Strategy for a Changing Climate and the overall progress of the Council in responding to climate change issues.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To note the current progress relating to the Environmental Strategy for a Changing Climate and the performance relating to the four climate change national indicators.
- (2) To approve the revised Environmental Strategy for a Changing Climate Change delivery plan and the continuing priority attached to it.
- (3) To support reducing carbon emissions by improving the energy efficiency of corporate buildings and also reducing other sources of Council emissions by gaining support from the Carbon Trust Local Authority Carbon Management programme.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 National government believes local government has a significant role to play on the climate change agenda. Local authorities are expected to show leadership and encourage local communities to take action to mitigate and to adapt to a changing climate.
- 1.2 Nationally the target is to reduce emissions by 20% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. To reflect the importance of local authorities leading change locally on the climate change agenda, a number of National indicators relating to climate change were introduced in 2008/09.

Proposals

- 1.3 The Council's current Environmental Strategy has a 121 point action plan. This action plan was developed before the introduction of the current National Indicators through which the performance of the Council is judged by National Government. Consequently many of the actions in the Environmental Strategy do not relate to the current national performance regime.
- 1.4 Because of this a new revised delivery plan has been produced which is focused on delivering improved performance against the National Indicators as well as delivering the Environmental Strategy for a Changing Climate.
- 1.5 Improving energy efficiency at Council properties and vehicle fuel consumption are high priority areas for reducing emissions. It also has the obvious advantage of reducing operational costs. Reduced energy usage, whether gas, electricity or fuel, can be achieved by a number of ways. These can range from changing staff behaviour to investing in higher efficiency equipment.
- 1.6 Raising staff awareness of how they can impact on energy usage is particularly important as it is both low cost and can deliver significant improvements.
- 1.7 We propose to seek support from the Carbon Trust Local Authority Carbon Management programme. The programme is free but requires the commitment of local authorities to commit sufficient resources to ensure the ten month programme is successfully implemented. The programme has worked so far with 135 local authorities and produced £70 million in financial savings and saved 865,000 tonnes of carbon emissions.

Conclusion

- 1.8 To deliver improved performance against the National Indicators a new 40 point action plan is proposed. This will provide a much clearer focus on priority areas for improvement.
- 1.9 The delivery plan covers delivery of the Environmental Strategy and improving the performance of the national indicators. It identifies resource requirements, the lead officer and target dates.
- 1.10 The Carbon Trust Local Authority Carbon Management Plan is an opportunity to gain expert support to assess the current opportunities to achieve further reductions in emissions. The aim is to join this programme early in 2010/11.

Background Information

- 2.1 There are four National Indicators measuring performance on climate change which were introduced in 2008/09. They are:
- NI 185 Reduction in CO2 emissions from local authority operations
 - NI 186 Reduction in CO2 emissions from the district
 - NI 188 Adaptation to climate change
 - NI 194 Reduction in Nitrous oxides (NOx) and Particulate emissions (PM10) from local authority operations.
- 2.2 There are two Local Area Agreement targets (LAA2) which relate to the national indicators. These are:
- NI 185 – to reduce emissions by 6% by 2011/12
 - NI 188 – to reach level 3 in adapting council services to a changing climate by 2011/12.
- 2.3 In addition the Environmental Strategy for a Changing Climate has an aim to reduce emissions (excluding sports centres) by 22% by 2011/12 which is also in the Council's Corporate Plan. This target was established from a baseline in 2006/07 and is now largely superseded by the new national indicators which were introduced in 2008/09.
- 2.4 The Audit Commission through Comprehensive Area Assessment examines the Council under Use of Natural Resources. The assessment which is currently underway is wider than purely climate change national indicators since it covers a broad range of natural resources (water, paper etc.).
- 2.5 Finally in the 2009 Customer satisfaction survey some 82% of residents believe Cherwell District Council have an important role to play in climate change issues. The results of the customer satisfaction survey regarding climate change in set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.6 Capital funding through a Climate change efficiency fund has been available to support energy efficiency projects. Some funds still exist for efficiency projects in 2010/11. It is important for the future that energy efficiency is given a high priority in refurbishment projects and that capital funds are sufficient to carry out such work.

Leading by Example/Emissions from Council Operations

- 2.6 In the first NI 185 baseline year of 2008/09, emissions from Cherwell District Council operations were 5,002 tonnes. The main sources were:
- Sports Centre 48%
 - Corporate buildings 23%
 - Transport 26%
 - Staff travel 3%.
- 2.7 Emissions in the baseline year were low due to the Sports Centre Modernisation Project. During this year, at any one time, the Bicester and

Kidlington pools were out of use for use for 5 and 6 months respectively along with a phased refurbishment closure programme for all other facilities. In addition, Woodgreen Open Air Pool was not open. Consequently, emissions from sports centres which were artificially low in 2008/09 will rise in 2009/10 with all the sports centres and Woodgreen operating. It is possible that emissions will rise further in 2010/11 with the larger (23% increase in building size including 76% increase in pool volume) of the new Spiceball Leisure Centre but it is expected that any increase energy consumption will be wholly or partly offset by the more energy efficient building.

- 2.8 Energy efficiency improvements have been made to corporate buildings particularly Bodicote House and Banbury Museum. Bodicote House was refurbished during 2008/09 and Banbury Museum had its lighting systems renewed in 2008/09. In addition, accommodation changes have meant the Old House and the Town Centre offices are no longer used for Cherwell District Council operations. Overall these improvements have for the first three quarters of 2009/10 reduced emissions by 14% compared to 2008/09. In addition these energy efficiencies also produce cost reductions
- 2.9 Thorpe Lane depot is due to be refurbished with contractors likely to commence work in March/April 2010. The refurbishment will substantially reduce emissions by incorporating improved energy efficiency measures such as increased insulation as well as features which reduce water usage particularly on the vehicle washdown. In addition the heating system for the office block may include a woodchip boiler and solar panels may be incorporated into the workshop roof. Improvements will be achieved in 2010/11 but the full year benefit will be realised in 2011/12
- 2.10 Transport Operations have shown a reduction in 2009/10. In the first three quarters emissions have dropped by around 3.5%. Mileages travelled have been reduced from a variety of changes such as the closure of Alkerton and the full implementation of the four day week. These reduced mileages with more fuel efficient vehicles have helped bring improvements. Further improvements are expected in 2010/11
- 2.11 Although improvements in corporate buildings and transport have been achieved for the first three quarters of 2009/10, these have been cancelled out by rises in sports centre emissions and, to a much lesser extent, staff travel
- 2.12 However it should be noted that there are a number of successes which have been achieved but are not counted against NI 185. These include:
 - A new electricity contract with 100% renewable electricity compared to the Environmental Strategy target of 50%. This was achieved at no additional cost and reduces our real emissions.
 - Running all the Council vehicle fleet on a 5% bio-diesel mix.
 - Reducing water usage at Bodicote house.
 - Reduced paper usage from the installation of new multi function devices.
- 2.13 Every large public building must display an energy efficiency rating known as a Display Energy Certificate (DEC). The ratings run from A-G with A being the best rating. A-D ratings are considered good energy efficiency performance.

Last autumn the two main corporate buildings which have to display certificates were rated as F but are improving due to the developments outlined above. DEC's for the sports centres will take some time as they require a reasonable period of operation before assessment.

- 2.14 Bodicote House has a reasonable performance on the energy efficiency certificate for heating but the building has high electricity consumption. ICT changes due over the next financial year involve changing servers and changing many workstations from PCs to thin clients. These will produce significant electricity savings which will improve the energy efficiency rating which will be re-evaluated in the Autumn 2010.
- 2.15 Successes have also been achieved which are measured by NI 194. This Indicator measures NOx and PM10. NI 194 is largely influenced by transport emissions and emissions from boilers. The on going vehicle replacement plan means that vehicles with Euro III engines are replaced by vehicles with Euro V engines. Each Euro V engine vehicle replacement reduces nitrous oxide (NOx) levels by 60% and also reduces soot or particulates (PM10) by 80% compared to the Euro III vehicle it replaced. Consequently NI 194 is expected to show good progress during 2009/10 and subsequent years.
- 2.16 When considering the ongoing need for improved performance, a number of options exist for future improvements which have been captured in a new delivery plan (Annex 1). These include:
- Improving the energy efficiency of the main corporate buildings so that the Display Energy Certificate (DEC) ratings rise to D or better.
 - Developing the Green Travel plan.
 - Increasing the bio-diesel mix once Highfield and Thorpe Lane fuel tanks are renewed during 2010.
 - Reducing fuel consumption as a result of changes to bin lifting equipment.
 - Evaluating the impact on climate change, CO2 emissions and use of natural resources of proposed capital projects.
 - Continuing to make capital funding available to drive energy efficiency improvements.
 - Ensuring climate change issues are addressed through the Service & Financial Planning process in 2010/11.
 - Considering future offsetting if emissions targets are not achievable.
- 2.17 The 2006/07 Corporate Plan target of 22% reduction in emissions excluding Sports Centres is currently on track with an anticipated end of 2009/10 position of 11% against the 2006/07 baseline. However, the emphasis has now shifted to the formal NI 185 which it is recommended be used for target setting in the future.
- 2.18 If approval is given to the new delivery plan, further detail regarding specific CO2 reduction targets will be prepared for annual service and financial planning and performance monitoring purposes.

Community CO2 Emissions

2.19 The overall emissions of the district are far in excess of the emissions of Cherwell District Council. While the Council's emissions are around 5000 tonnes the overall emissions of the district are in excess of 1.2 million tonnes. Data for the national indicator NI 186 which measures overall district emissions is two years in arrears. District wide emissions from recent data are set out below;

	Industry & Commercial (1000 tonnes)	Domestic (1000 tonnes)	Road Transport (1000 tonnes)	Emissions per capita (tonnes)
2005	532	339	376	9.1
2006	536	347	363	9.1
2007	510	338	365	8.8

- 2.20 The emissions in Cherwell per capita are the second highest in Oxfordshire (Vale of White Horse emissions are greater) and one of the highest in the South East (only exceeded or matched by Chichester & Swale)
- 2.21 Emissions in the district are high largely from the combination of high emissions from commercial and industrial facilities and transport. Although motorways are excluded from transport emissions calculations emissions from the major highways which run through the district such as the A34, A40, A41, A43 and A44 are included.
- 2.22 The high emissions per capita have helped secure free consultancy from the Energy Savings Trust so that a 2 year action plan can be developed to engage residents and businesses to act to reduce emissions. The initial draft report has only very recently been received. An action plan will be developed from this report by the summer of 2010.
- 2.23 To engage residents and businesses will require additional resources. To achieve this resources have been moved within the Environmental Services budget for this and the growing climate change agenda. In particular we are moving one post from Recycling and Waste Collection to Environmental Strategy and increase the number of days the part time Environmental Strategy Officer works from three to four days a week. These changes were achieved as well as Environmental Services delivering over £140k of savings for 2010/11.
- 2.24 The Cherwell Community Planning Partnership Climate brings together a selection of organisations from across the district to share information and best practice about climate change issues. All members have made pledges to carry out actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change and the progress of these pledges are monitored at each meeting.
- 2.25 One of the largest opportunities to engage a wider audience is the proposed Eco Town in Bicester. This development will showcase and help promote a lower carbon lifestyle. A show home will be an excellent resource to engage residents about changes that can be made to existing homes to save energy and reduce emissions

Adaptation

- 2.26 Adaptation is about adapting services to new weather patterns which will occur as a result of climate change. Even if emissions are quickly reduced, there will still be changes in the climate as a result of increasing carbon dioxide levels.
- 2.27 Extreme weather events include high intensity rainfall leading to flooding events and heat waves causing health issues for vulnerable people. Such events can damage the ability of an organisation to deliver services.
- 2.28 NI 188 covers adaptation. It covers the processes the authority has to deal with adapting services. Up to the end of March 2009 the Council had achieved level one. This involved actions such as:
- Signing the Nottingham declaration
 - Producing a Climate Impact Profile Report (LCLIP).
- 2.29 The next two levels 2 & 3 require comprehensive risk based assessments and prioritised actions in the different areas of the organisation. To achieve this, specialist external support has been engaged to produce risk based assessments of all the services. Level 2 should be achieved during the first quarter of 2010/11 with level 3 (all key services) being achieved by the end of 2010/11.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 3.1 The key issue is one of considering the revised delivery plan which takes into account local priorities as measured by national indicators. Account should be taken of the good work and improved performance already achieved but despite this, there will be continued pressure to maintain a positive direction of travel specifically with ongoing CO2 emission reductions.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

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| Option One | To approve the proposed revised delivery plan. |
| Option Two | To reject the proposed delivery plan |
| Option Three | To ask officers to modify the proposed delivery plan |

Consultations

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| Officers Energy Efficiency Group | Continued investment in energy efficiency projects and promote energy awareness will help to reduce emissions and energy costs. |
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Implications

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| Financial: | There are no short term financial implications with this |
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report which are not within the 2010/11 budget. Some proposals could result in reinvesting savings to achieve further savings but this will only occur where there is financial benefit to the Council.

Comments checked by Joanne Kaye, Management Accountant 01295 221545

Legal:

There are no legal implications with this report

Comments checked by Liz , Head of Legal & Democratic 01295 221686

Risk Management:

Risk management is central to adaption to climate change

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Insurance & Risk Management officer 01295 221566

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

Environmental Strategy

Executive Portfolio

Councillor Reynolds
Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Revised Environmental Strategy for a Changing Climate Delivery Plan
Appendix 2	Customer satisfaction survey 2009 comments regarding climate change
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services
Contact Information	01295 221902 ed.potter@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk