

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 19 March 2015

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Title: Climate Local Commitment

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Susan Barker

Key decision: **No**

Summary

1. This report provides information on the Climate Local initiative developed by the Local Government Association (LGA), and the rationale for signing up to this commitment and producing an Uttlesford District Council Climate Local Strategy and Action Plan. The report sets out our progress to date and the issues and concerns that face the Council and district in relation to fuel poverty and health, carbon reduction and climate change adaptation.
2. The LGA initiative has been developed in response to the Government's assessment of the role of local authorities in addressing climate change. The government have identified a clear local role for local authorities to tackle climate change impacts and carbon reduction. The LGA initiative therefore provides a framework for local authorities to deliver this role. In addition, it assists local authorities in reporting on HECA, the Home Energy Conservation Act that requires statutory reporting by local authorities on plans to address carbon reduction and fuel poverty and set out how progress will be monitored.
3. The Climate Local initiative comprises two elements. Firstly, a Climate Local Commitment (Contained in the Strategy and Action Plan as appendix to this report) for councils to sign demonstrates their commitment to addressing climate change and associated issues and to challenge themselves to build on their existing achievements.
4. The commitment also provides the opportunity to work with the LGA, other local authorities and partners, eg Environment Agency, and be involved in emerging initiatives, including those from central government, as well as the ongoing development of Climate Local through participation in the Climate Local Network.

Recommendations

- A. That Uttlesford Council sign up to the Climate Local Commitment (set out in Appendix 1) to this report.
- B. That the Council endorses the Climate Local Strategy and Action Plan for Uttlesford District Council

Financial Implications

5. *None:*

Background Papers

6. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

Impact

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	Both internal and external consultation will take place
Community Safety	Actions to raise profile of climate risks within communities
Equalities	A provisional Equalities Impact Assessment will be drafted.
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	The action plan will reducing energy consumption, carbon emissions and protect the environment
Ward-specific impacts	District wide
Workforce/Workplace	Actions to raise profile of climate risks

Situation

8. The Climate Local Commitment is an LGA initiative established to drive and support local authority action on an increasingly changing climate. It has evolved in response to the cessation of the National Indicator set, so now rather than national targets it enables setting locally owned and determined targets. It is set up to support councils' efforts to both reduce their own carbon emissions and district wide emissions and to improve authority and community resilience to the effects of the changing climate and extreme weather. It has clear links to the key strategic priority of health and wellbeing and the socio-economic agenda in tackling the social issues surrounding fuel poverty.
9. Uttlesford District Council signed the local authority Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change back in 2006 and its commitments need updating to respond to the latest climate data and legislation changes. Our Natural Resources Management Strategy is due for review and our Local Authority

Carbon Management programme came to a close in 2013. This initiative offers a timely opportunity to build on the work that has been done to date.

What have we achieved since 2006

10. Since signing the Nottingham Declaration the Council has successfully implemented measures to reduce CO2 emissions internally by over 1162 tonnes some 31% from its 2006 baseline across our estate and operations.
11. Uttlesford joined an energy saving campaign together with 15 other local authorities. Called the Herts and Essex Energy Partnership (HEEP), the scheme offered residents discounted and free energy saving measures, including cavity and solid wall insulation, loft insulation, replacement heating systems and renewable energy technologies. Up to 50% loans for high cost energy saving measures and renewables were also available. The scheme supported both “able to pay” residents and also the “priority group”. The scheme ran from June 2009 to June 2011. During that time a total of 931 insulation measures were carried out, 37 heating measures and 18 renewable energy technologies were installed saving a total of 21,855 tonnes of carbon over the lifetime of the measures.
12. Through a planning policy on home extensions introduced in November 2005, the Council requires cost-effective energy efficiency improvements like loft and cavity wall insulation to be carried out on existing dwellings when they are extended. In this way, the extra energy that is used and CO2 that is produced by the extension is compensated for by improvements elsewhere. The policy has been successfully implemented by planning and building surveying officers since April 2006. Uttlesford were the first local authority in the UK to introduce a requirement like this and it has been held up as good practice by:
 - National Energy Efficiency Awards 2006 (Highly Commended)
 - Federation of Master Builders (2007)
 - Local Government Association (2007)
 - Parliamentary Select Committee for Communities and Local Government (2008)
 - Audit Commission (2009)
13. We have distributed energy saving lightbulbs and other energy saving devices through schemes, provided advice on saving energy to residents, all of which has contributed to reducing domestic energy costs and CO2 emissions.
14. The Council has increased its recycling rate to 54% in 2012, compared to 42% in 2006, which substantially reduces the amount of waste going to landfill and the carbon that is emitted.
15. Since 2006 Uttlesford District Council planning policy has required new homes to reach the Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 energy efficiency standard. Affordable housing has been built to the Code for Sustainable

Homes level 4 energy efficiency standard. The result of which has reduced energy consumption and water consumption for new properties in the district.

16. The Council carried out an internal climate impact risk assessment for its organisation based on 2009 UK Climate Projection data. We identified risks, which are being built into business plans and the corporate risk register, to enable the authority to build resilience in its estate and in the delivery of its services and operations to extreme climatic conditions.

Transport

17. Transport related emissions account for a substantial proportion of emissions both within the Council and across the district.
18. Internally we have introduced a fuel efficient waste fleet, staff have been trained with green driving techniques to reduce fuel use, cycle facilities have been provided for / staff public.
19. The Council applies planning policies to new development that discourages car ownership/use in town centre residential developments and facilities access to public transport.

Fuel Poverty

20. Energy efficiency measures have wider health and wellbeing implications, reducing domestic energy consumption is directly linked to tackling fuel poverty. While we have been very proactive, we urgently need to build on this energy efficiency work as we have 2012 fuel poverty figures of 9.4%, some 7849 households in our district. The Government have predicted the national figure will rise from currently 4.5m households to 8.5m by 2020. With oil, gas and electricity prices rising at over 7% a year, pushing increasing number of households into fuel poverty, coupled with the financial changes affecting low income households under the new Welfare Reform and universal credit, we recognise there is still much work to do.
21. The Council has installed Air Source Heat Pumps in 90 of its housing stock since 2006, replacing oil boilers with a cost effective heating system to reduce energy costs and carbon emission. A project is underway to install external wall insulation on the Council's solid wall houses.
22. Looking forward: Develop a new climate change strategy and action plan, coupled with a Green Deal/ECO delivery programme to target energy inefficient properties and deliver better health outcomes for residents in the district, essential to reduce cold weather related illness and winter mortality.
23. Forge stronger relationships with key partners (including NHS, public health authority, CCG, CAB, Age UK, RCCE, Parish Councils) to enable information

to be shared where vulnerable residents are identified to ensure they are able to benefit from grants and support available.

24. Work with housing providers to ensure that new affordable housing is built to the highest possible energy efficiency standard to minimise heating costs for residents, especially the vulnerable and those on low incomes.

Home Energy Conservation Act

25. All local authorities have a newly imposed statutory requirement starting in 2013, reporting progress on local authority internal and district wide carbon reduction measures. It also requires local authorities to set out its programme on the Green Deal and how it will tackle fuel poverty with progress to be monitored and reported to Government in future years.
26. Looking forward: A new climate local strategy and action plan coupled with the Council's delivery of the Green Deal/ECO will provide the basis for delivering the local authority requirements of HECA and provide a structure for statutory annual reporting on HECA (Home Energy Conservation Act).

Green Deal/Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

27. Uttlesford is working with local Green Deal/ECO delivery partners to secure funding and deliver energy efficiency measures across all tenures.
28. The outcome of this work will support local strategic priorities, including better health outcomes, carbon reduction and improving the energy efficiency of both private and public sector stock. Underpinning this is the use local contractors and installers wherever possible, creating new employment opportunities within Essex.

Carbon emissions

29. In May 2012 the Government department DECC commissioned a report by the Committee on Climate Change: 'How local authorities can reduce emissions and manage climate risk'. It identified that local authorities have a crucial role in contributing to carbon emissions reductions and helping the Government meet its UK carbon budgets (milestone targets for reducing carbon emissions up to 2050).
30. Looking forward: Identify further internal CO2 reduction opportunities within our estate, services and operations. Develop actions and business cases for their implementation. Identify carbon reduction opportunities in the built and natural environment that can be achieved in the district. Develop actions to implement these measures across the district.

Climate change impacts (floods/droughts extreme weather events)

31. The 2012 DECC report recognised that building resilience to the impacts of climate change (flooding, heatwaves, extreme weather events) must be

addressed at a local level. Local authorities have a crucial role in increasing the resilience of buildings and infrastructure in their localities, managing and extending natural resources to promote biodiversity and reduce the risk of flooding, as well as protecting their populations from the health impacts of a changing climate. The Climate Local initiative focuses councils efforts to reduce flood risks, heat stress, managing the impacts of extreme weather, manage water supply risk and protect our natural environment.

32. Looking forward: As an authority we need to build on the climate risks and adaptation measures identified for our own organisation, update these in light of more recent modelling data, share this data and identified risks with our local communities and businesses and provide support in applying adaptation measures and build resilience throughout our district.

Benefits of Climate Local

33. Climate Local provides a strong response to the climate change agenda, it supports economic growth by encouraging local employment in the green sector and investment in green businesses. A positive consequence of this activity is attracting firms keen to locate and operate in a sustainably responsible environment. By focusing on energy consumption and potential impacts of climate change, local businesses can reduce utility billfails and manage and plan for climate change impacts both locally as well as within their supply/delivery chains.
34. This Climate Local Commitment provides an opportunity to build on existing achievements and renew our commitment to addressing the issues surrounding climate change. This national commitment allows Uttlesford to align itself with its peers and authorities across the UK, presenting a united approach to addressing climate change. Since its launch last summer, 50 authorities have signed up to the commitment, each producing their action plan tailored to local issues and needs.
35. Key to the success of Climate Local is partnership working, both through the network of local authority partners and support of relevant organisations. The Environment Agency's enhanced role as the delivery body for climate change adaptation in England will directly support local authorities build their capacity to manage climate risks, establish business cases for action, providing evidence of local climate impacts and provide them with practical advice and guidance.

Drivers

36. There are a number of drivers for engaging the Climate Local initiative including:
 - 12 of the last 14 years have been the warmest globally since records began;
 - 4 of the 5 UK's wettest years on record have been since 2000;
 - Statutory local authority reporting on HECA;
 - Changes in legislation and climate data;
 - Need to build resilience from increasing changes in weather patterns;

- Urgent need to reduce carbon emissions;
- Government identification of local authority role;
- National carbon budgets, but no local targets in place;
- The Council's Natural Resources Management Strategy is due for review;
- Local Authority Carbon Management Programme ends
- Progressing the Health and Wellbeing agenda;
- Progressing the Economic Growth agenda.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

37. On 27th January 2006 the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council signed the Nottingham Declaration making a public declaration of its commitment to reduce its impact on climate change. This provided the overarching commitment across the Council to address climate change.

38. In 2007 the Council launched the Local authority Carbon Management Programme (LACM) to run for 5 years to reduce carbon emissions.

39. A new commitment and Climate Change Strategy will make a strong contribution to the achievements of the Council's Corporate Plan. This report and Strategy sets out a commitment to maintain Uttlesford's leading role in local efforts to reduce the impacts of climate change.

Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Failure to deliver actions	Little risk as part of role and items within budget	Council reputation	Monitor actions to ensure delivery. Actions are part of staff role and items are budgeted.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.