

# Progress report – Scrutiny Climate Change Investigation

## Scrutiny, item 4

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Scrutiny</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>4 October 2006</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Progress report – Scrutiny Climate Change Investigation</b>	
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	<b>on behalf of the Scrutiny Climate Change Investigation Group</b>	

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### Summary

The Scrutiny Climate Change Investigation Group has been gathering evidence to formulate a set of recommendations on what steps the Council should take in the future to deal with the causes and effects of climate change in Uttlesford.

The Group has discovered many examples of good practice already occurring within the Council. However, there are areas for improvement and there are other areas with good potential, but uncertainty remains on what direction they will take. This report outlines the investigation progress, some findings and the likely set of recommendations that will be presented. The report has two recommendations to make at this time, one concerning public consultation and another concerning the duration of the study.

### Recommendations

1. We would recommend the Corporate Group for Sustainability be given the task of developing Climate Change strategy for council, involving public consultation. Consultation must seek the views of a wide range of residents or else there will be limited public 'buy-in' to the climate change strategy.
2. We recommend that the Scrutiny Climate Change Investigation Group be given further time to meet with the remaining groups of officers it needs to and compile its final report. This will be completed in time to be presented at the next Scrutiny meeting.

### Background Papers

None

### Impact

Communication/Consultation	The consultation strategy will need to be developed in conjunction with the Communication & Consultation Officer
Community Safety	No impacts, provided consultation is carried out consistent with Council policy
Equalities	No impacts, provided consultation is carried

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	out consistent with Council policy
Finance	Budget for climate change consultation may need to be provided, possibly as part of a wider Sustainability budget
Human Rights	No impacts, provided consultation is carried out consistent with Council policy
Legal implications	No impacts, provided consultation is carried out consistent with Council policy
Sustainability	Care should be taken to ensure consultation avoids production of unnecessary print material and packaging. Responses could be sought via a paperless, web-based system wherever possible.
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	The consultation activity could be carried out in house or subcontracted to a third party as appropriate

### Situation

- 1 The Scrutiny Climate Change Investigation Group has found clear and compelling evidence for man-made climate change and recognise the urgent need for immediate action to reduce emissions, and the important role local authorities can play in dealing with climate change. This supports and enforces the Council's stated position according to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change.
- 2 The Group has met with officers from Human Resources, Finance, Housing and Development Services, as well as attending various seminars and events including Sustainable Energy Beacon Council open days.
- 3 The Group has discovered many examples of good practice already occurring within the Council. For example the Housing department is implementing software to ensure vehicles are deployed efficiently, and is beginning to put low-carbon technology in Council houses, and Development Services is adopting tougher planning policies on sustainability.
- 4 However, there are areas for improvement. The Group is concerned that Council energy management is not adequate as shown by how the problem of overheating in the London Road Offices was dealt with in the run up to and during this summer. Staff awareness of sustainability issues needs to be improved. Financial resources need to be allocated in order to save energy, as existing budgets do not have the scope to cover this work, even though it will reap financial benefits.

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- 5 There are other areas with good potential, but uncertainty remains on what direction they will take: for example, the review of the car-lease scheme, Council procurement policies, implementation of the staff travel plan, the new recycling collection vehicle fleet.
- 6 The Group is likely to recommend a wide range of measures and initiatives to be implemented over short (1 year), medium (2-3 years) and long time scales (4-5 years). These are likely to include:
  - Strategy:
    - Create an overarching climate change strategy for the Council (this recommendation is already approved)
    - Allocate appropriate resources to deliver this strategy
    - Establish a 'green' procurement policy that minimises the environmental impact created by the goods and services the Council purchases
  - Council buildings:
    - Implement a rigorous programme of energy management to continually increase energy efficiency
    - Progressively adopt low carbon energy technologies (solar, wind, biomass, combined heat and power) for generation of heat and electricity
    - Recycle costs savings in reduced energy use in order to make longer and longer term investments in reducing the carbon footprint of council buildings
    - Increase staff participation in management of energy and water through training, incentives and regular information and updates on performance
    - Publicise progress with energy management to set a good example to Uttlesford residents
  - Council Housing
    - Continue to reduce energy bills for tenants by attaining increasing standards of energy efficiency
    - Gradually install low carbon energy technologies in all Council housing
    - Raise awareness of these programmes among tenants and educate them on how they can save energy through behaviour changes
  - Transport
    - Ensure the car lease and loan scheme provides incentives for people to choose low emissions vehicles.
    - Investigate switching some staff to low-emissions pool vehicles

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- Reduce the emissions of council fleet vehicles, possibly by converting them to run on bio-fuels
  - Renew efforts to implement the staff travel plan: implement a system to measure emissions from staff commuting and provide incentives and alternatives so staff can reduce them.
  - Planning
    - Demand increasing standards of sustainable construction from developers by introducing requirements through the LDF and SPD process relating to energy, water, building materials, waste, wildlife, local amenities and transportation.
    - Support this by providing developers with guidance, advice and information on how they may achieve these requirements (this recommendation is already approved)
    - Seek to eventually achieve new development which is ‘climate neutral’
  - Public/Community
    - Support community initiatives that have similar objectives to the Council’s climate change strategy
    - Run a continuous programme of community engagement to raise awareness of climate change and sustainability issues and encourage them to reduce their environmental impact
    - Allocate more resources to increasing the energy efficiency of the existing private housing stock and achieve the Council’s 2010 HECA target
    - Assist local businesses and other organisations with reducing their carbon emissions and adapting to climate change
- 7 The Group’s view is that the Corporate Group for Sustainability is the most appropriate vehicle for delivering its recommendations.
- 8 At this stage, there is one recommendation the Group would like to make prior to the final report, namely that the Corporate Group for Sustainability be given the task of developing Climate Change strategy for council, involving public consultation. Consultation must seek the views of a wide range of residents or else there will be limited public ‘buy-in’ to the climate change strategy.
- 9 The Group still needs to meet with officers from Environment and Cultural Services, with the Chief Executive, Strategy and Performance and Quality of Life EMs and then compile final set of recommendations. It is recommended also that more time is allowed for the Group to do this. It is expected that the investigation will be completed by the next Scrutiny Meeting (end 2006).

### Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
<b>Corporate Group does not have resources to develop strategy</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>Strategy not delivered in timely fashion</b>	<b>Check workload/prioritisation of Corporate Group. Allocate more resources if necessary</b>
<b>Communications team does not have staff resources to carry out consultation at this time</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>Consultation is delayed, completion of strategy delayed as result</b>	<b>Consultation should follow writing of draft strategy by Corporate Group, therefore unlikely to start until early 2007. Check communications team workload for next 6 months and time project appropriately</b>