

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **11 March 2008**

By: **Director of Transport and Environment**

Title of report: **Climate Change Strategy**

Purpose of report: **To approve proposals for developing a Climate Change Strategy**

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1 approve the approach outlined in this report to developing a Climate Change Strategy and Implementation Plan for the County Council;**
 - 2 agree to setting up an early seminar for Members and staff to contribute to the development of the Strategy, and to engagement with Members and stakeholders, including youth (inc. Youth Cabinet) and older people's groups; and**
 - 3 agree that the Council should become a formal signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and join the South East Climate Change Partnership.**
-

1 Financial appraisal

1.1 Developing the Climate Change Strategy is likely to require an extra £50,000 - £60,000 in 2008/9. This should cover additional staffing costs, as well as the costs of joining the South East Climate Change Partnership, awareness-raising and training events and publications. These additional costs could be met from the one-off allocation of £150,000 that Cabinet is proposing for climate change and sustainability initiatives in next year's budget.

2 Supporting information

2.1 Global warming is the biggest long-term threat to our prosperity and well-being, and the LGA's Climate Change Commission has emphasised a pivotal role for councils in tackling climate change (Appendix 1). This is reflected in the new national performance framework, with the sustainable management of resources also lying at the core of Comprehensive Area Assessments.

2.2 The need for a corporate and strategic response is encapsulated in a new policy steer for Strategic Management that calls for the authority "to make positive progress towards tackling climate change in East Sussex, both in the County Council's own activities and through work with partners, to influence the behaviour of others." It is also fully acknowledged in the county's draft Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy which highlights a number of key tasks for partners in both reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impacts of future climate changes.

2.3 The County Council has been actively and successfully addressing climate change issues on a number of fronts over a number of years. However, there is also a need for a more systematic approach that will aim to embed carbon reduction and resilience to climate change into our organisational strategy and behaviour. In developing a Climate Change Strategy by the end of this year, our response must include actions for both adapting to unavoidable climatic changes over the next 40 years and for reducing the future impacts of global warming by curbing our greenhouse gas emissions.

2.4 The two main areas where the Council must act to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change are in its roles as an estate and fleet manager, and as a service provider. Community leadership is a further area where the authority also has a key role to play and, while I believe our initial focus should be on developing a strategy and action plan for the County Council, we must also engage with strategic partners in considering the scope for developing a more integrated, county-wide response to help influence behaviour more widely.

2.5 As well as developing an over-arching strategy and objectives for tackling climate change, we should prepare a more detailed implementation plan to detail the specific actions each Council

department will take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate changes. This is likely to include further actions relating to:

- energy conservation and the design and management of buildings
- waste minimisation and recycling
- sustainable procurement
- community leadership, communications and awareness raising
- business support
- spatial planning, transport policy and highways maintenance
- service provision and staff travel
- emergency planning
- environmental management

2.6 The high profile and potential complexity of some of the issues suggest that the strategy should be developed as a formal project, with dedicated officer support over the next 12 months. While more detailed proposals for developing the strategy are set out in Appendix 2, our success would be much assisted by Councillor Reid (who is leading on this issue for Cabinet) and Councillor Lock (as Lead Member for Transport and Environment) joining the project board. Part of the process will be to ensure active engagement with Members, staff and stakeholders, including the Youth Cabinet, youth and older people's groups, and making use of the media, including 'Your County'. Residents are proud of East Sussex and this passion should be engaged in helping to address the climate change challenge. Engagement should include an early seminar for Members and staff with some external, expert speakers, including an opportunity for brainstorming.

3 Partnerships for addressing climate change

3.1 To underline its community leadership role, I recommend that the authority should now become a formal signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change (reproduced in Appendix 3). This is a high level, broad statement of commitment that has already been signed by more than 230 local authorities. There is no direct financial cost to signing and the Declaration is supported by DEFRA, IDeA, LGA, the Environment Agency, the Carbon Trust and the UK Climate Impacts Programme. It is administered by the Energy Savings Trust which offers extensive support to signatories.

3.2 I also believe that the authority would similarly benefit from joining the South East Climate Change Partnership. This involves a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations with the main aim of promoting adaptive planning in the region. It helps members develop integrated responses and serves as an important link with the UK Climate Impacts Programme and other national and regional organisations that are addressing similar issues. Joining the Partnership would cost the Council around £4,600 in 2008/9 to help cover the costs of employing a full-time Programme Manager, administrative support, website development, holding an Annual Forum and organising other meetings/events.

4 Conclusion and reason for recommendations

4.1 Responding to the new policy steer and developing a comprehensive Climate Change Strategy and Implementation Plan will enable the authority to clearly define its objectives, priorities and targets in relation to climate change, and to systematically identify appropriate actions for all its services. By developing a coherent approach to mitigation and adaptation, the Council may benefit in terms of energy and money savings, at the same time as improving overall environmental performance, enhancing living conditions and protecting residents from the threats posed by extreme weather events, such as flooding and heat waves.

4.2 Our initial focus should be on developing the Council's own response to the challenges of climate change. The proposed project management arrangements should help ensure high level support across the authority which will be essential to securing a positive outcome.

4.3 To further underline and support its commitment, I recommend that the Council sign the Nottingham Declaration and also join the South East Climate Change Partnership. We should also consider including appropriate targets on climate change in the new Local Area Agreement (Appendix 4) for East Sussex, which could help prompt further work with strategic partners to influence behaviour more widely.

LGA Climate Change Commission's recommendations on leadership ¹

Local authorities must strengthen leadership; build capacity; improve transparency; and engage others to tackle climate change more effectively. They have an opportunity, over the next two years, to put a framework in place to address both mitigation and adaptation.

Leadership

Councils are well placed to lead all sections of their community's response to climate change. They are uniquely placed through their democratic mandate, their service delivery, regulatory functions, partnership convening and leadership, place shaping roles, and guarding communities against risk. The leadership needs to be systematic – councils can exercise a powerful demonstration effect through their footprint in the local area, illustrating to the rest of the public sector, the private and voluntary sectors and citizens what can be achieved.

But the evidence shows that success to date has been the result of 'wilful individuals' often leading action from relatively junior positions. The new performance management framework, including the new indicators, provides a new rallying point for leadership. The number of LAAs with a climate change target will supply powerful evidence of the seriousness with which LSPs, and local authorities, view climate change.

A number of councils have identified the importance of political leadership and executive champions throughout the authority operating within a strategic framework that makes climate change the overarching priority.

We recommend that:

- 1 Government must take the opportunities afforded by the legislative programme to strengthen the statutory underpinning for local government action. The framework should be strengthened by:
 - a taking a power in the Climate Change Bill to apply a new duty on all public bodies to tackle climate change;
 - b ensure that national carbon reduction targets become a material consideration in the planning law that underpins the work of local planning authorities;
 - c extending the duty of co-operation to multi-area agreements (MAAs);
 - d extend the capacity of local councils to hold public bodies in their area to account for their response to climate change;
 - e ensure that the new economic development duty on local government requires sustainable economic development;
 - f allow councils to fast-track proposals for carbon reduction within their local development frameworks.
- 2 Over the next two years, there must be a significant and measurable improvement in the local government response to climate change. Within the new LAAs, and across their roles and operations, local government and its partners must show their commitment to tackling both mitigation and adaptation. A statutory duty should be imposed on those councils that are failing to respond to climate change.
- 3 The LGA should launch, early in 2008, a consultation with its membership on the ways in which the statutory framework to tackle climate change can be strengthened.
- 4 All LAAs must carry targets to reduce carbon emissions and tackle adaptation, at a minimum, that would apply to all public bodies operating in the area.

¹ In addition to its recommendations on leadership, the Commission also included further recommendations on increasing the **capacity** of local councils to tackle climate change effectively, on the need to increase the level of **transparency** and scrutiny, and on **engagement** with other organisations and the wider community.

- 5 The LGA, Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) should monitor how many LAAs include a climate change target; assess the implications including those for Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships; and challenge those LSPs that choose not to recognise climate change as a priority. The LGA should assess what has been achieved as a result of new LAA targets on climate change.
- 6 The council leader and chief executive should be jointly accountable for the delivery of climate change targets and action on climate change. By December 2008, all councils should have signed the Nottingham Declaration and published a climate change strategy and action plan covering both mitigation and adaptation. The plans should include measurable and quantifiable milestones at 2010, 2015 and 2020.
- 7 All councils must undertake a climate change impact assessment of all major policy, planning and investment decisions, screening decisions to ensure that they are systematically lowering carbon emissions and ensuring that decisions are resilient to climate change.
- 8 Councils working together are developing MAAs to manage issues that straddle council boundaries. CLG, Defra and the LGA should identify pilot MAAs as an instrument for partnership working on climate change. For example, ensuring effective adaptation where the impacts are common across a sub-region and managing the risks, such as river flooding, requires a co-ordinated approach; as do responses to reduce transport related emissions; or bringing together public purchasing and procurement.
- 9 By December 2008, as part of their strategic planning including sustainable communities strategies, local development frameworks, local transport plans and asset management strategies, every council working with the LSP should take further action to:
 - a make energy savings in the public estate and fleet
 - b procure green energy services for their own buildings and increase the use of de-centralised or renewable energy sources where appropriate in their area
 - c expand the alternatives to car use in their area by improving walking and cycling rates and the use of public transport
 - d introduce low carbon goals as part of their public procurement
 - e improve the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock
 - f ensure local infrastructure and services are more resilient to both trend climate change and extreme weather events.

Organisational arrangements for developing the strategy

The high profile and potential complexity of some of the issues and the need for action across all areas indicate that the strategy and action plan must be developed as a formal project with clear roles and responsibilities, working to a well-defined brief and project plan. As the project's main Sponsor, I would assume overall responsibility for its success.

A corporate approach with high level support from both members and senior managers across the authority will be essential to securing a positive outcome. Chief Officers have therefore agreed that each department should nominate a member of their senior management team to sit on the Project Board (which I would chair). We also believe it would be most helpful if Councillor Reid (who is leading on this issue for Cabinet) and Councillor Lock (as Lead Member for Transport and Environment) were to join the Project Board.

The Board will also be accountable for the success of the project – helping to direct, monitor and control its overall progress – and must be willing to ensure that sufficient and appropriate staff resources are committed to developing and implementing an effective Climate Change Strategy.

Paul Treadgold will act as Project Manager – to steer the project on a day-to-day basis and manage the wider project team which must also actively involve managers from across the authority with the experience, skills and influence to make a positive personal contribution and secure the wider engagement of their colleagues.

Developing a comprehensive Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and engaging with strategic partners will also require the support of a dedicated Climate Change Officer for at least the next 9-12 months. To ensure that we employ someone with the right knowledge, skills and experience to be effective from the outset, I am looking to second a member of my Strategic Policy Team, Nick Claxton, to this key role. However, we will need to ensure sufficient and appropriate cover for his existing duties, and backfilling for the whole of 2008/9 would cost around £40,000 - £45,000.

The Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change

We acknowledge that

- Evidence shows that climate change is occurring.
- Climate change will continue to have far reaching effects on the UK's people and places, economy, society and environment.

We welcome the

- Social, economic and environmental benefits which come from combating climate change.
- Emissions targets agreed by central government and the programme for delivering change, as set out in the UK Climate Change Programme.
- Opportunity for local government to lead the response at a local level, encouraging and helping local residents, local businesses and other organisations - to reduce their energy costs, to reduce congestion, to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to improve the local environment and to deal with fuel poverty in our communities.
- Endorsement of this declaration by central government.

We commit our Council from this date to

- Work with central government to contribute, at a local level, to the delivery of the UK Climate Change Programme, the Kyoto Protocol and the target for carbon dioxide reduction by 2010.
- Participate in local and regional networks for support.
- Within the next two years develop plans with our partners and local communities to progressively address the causes and the impacts of climate change, according to our local priorities, securing maximum benefit for our communities.
- Publicly declare, within appropriate plans and strategies, the commitment 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.
- Assess the risk associated with climate change and the implications for our services and our communities of climate change impacts and adapt accordingly.
- Encourage all sectors in our local community to take the opportunity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions and to make public their commitment to action.
- Monitor the progress of our plans against the actions needed and publish the result.

XXX Council acknowledges the increasing impact that climate change will have on our community during the 21st century and commits to tackling the causes and effects of a changing climate on our county.

Indicators relating to climate change proposed in the National Performance Framework

- NI 185 CO₂ reduction from local authority operations
- NI 186 Per capita CO₂ emissions in the local authority area
- NI 187 Tackling fuel poverty – people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating
- NI 188 Adapting to climate change
- NI 189 Flood and coastal erosion risk management
- NI 194 Level of air quality – reduction in NO_x and primary PM₁₀ emissions through local authority's estate and operations
- NI 198 Children travelling to school – mode of travel usually used