

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT BY CLIMATE CHANGE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

6. UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

'D' RECOMMENDATION - that the update report be noted.

1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 This report provides an update on the work of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group and highlights some of the key areas currently being discussed by the Group.

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities

2.1 The Climate Change review will contribute to the following corporate priorities:

Caring about what's built and where

Care for and improve our natural and built environment.

Leading the way, working together

Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.

3.0 Background

3.1 At the meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 10 June 2008, the Committee agreed the scope and terms of reference of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group. It was agreed by the Committee that the purpose of the Task and Finish Group is to make informed policy recommendations for the development of a climate change strategy and action plan for East Herts Council.

3.2 The Task and Finish Group has now met three times, with the most recent meeting having been held on 25 July 2008.

3.3 In addition to the establishment of the member level Task and Finish Group, two officer level groups have been created to progress the work of the Member Group and to contribute to the preparation of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. These are the:

- Strategy Group, and the
- Operations and Implementation Group.

4.0 Report

4.1 The three meetings of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group held so far have enabled members to make good progress at reviewing the wide ranging agenda of climate change as it affects East Herts both in terms of mitigation (the reduction of CO₂ emissions) and adaptation (the modification of policy/service provision in the light of changing climatic conditions).

4.2 The Task and Finish Group has reviewed progress made in the delivery of the Council's existing Energy Policy and Action Plan, many actions of which are closely allied to the development of the Climate Change Action Plan. Progress on the Energy Action Plan was found to be very good with targets on schedule.

4.3 The Group agreed at its first meeting that the involvement of young people was a key priority in the preparation of a comprehensive Climate Change Policy for the District. To this end workshops are being held at the forthcoming Youth Conference, which is taking place on 24 September 2008, where the views and thoughts of young people will be sought. In addition a briefing is to be held with members of the Youth Council in the autumn.

4.4 A major aspect that the Task and Finish Group has recognised, as its work has progressed, is of the particularly wide ranging nature of the topic of Climate Change and its potential impacts on the community of East Herts. The Group therefore agreed six broad "themes" in order to more effectively consider and develop a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. The 6 themes are:

- **Transport** (e.g. including fleet vans and staff commuting)
- **Buildings** (e.g. including energy use and water)
- **Information Technology** (e.g. including procurement, energy use and disposal)
- **Contracted – out services** (e.g. including grounds maintenance, pools and refuse)
- **Procurement** (e.g. including materials and services)
- **Staff and Member Awareness and Behaviour** (e.g. including internal communication).

Each of the themes is being studied in turn by the Group and through the two officer Groups potential actions in each area developed and assessed.

The same themes will also be used to assess external issues in conjunction with other public service providers; the LSP and the voluntary section amongst others.

- 4.5 At the last meeting of the Task and Finish Group in July, a strategic carbon embedding matrix developed by the Carbon Trust, was used to assess current progress by the Council and where we may wish to see ourselves in the future in terms of mainstreaming carbon reduction. The matrix is attached at Appendix A to this report on pages 13 - 14).

The Matrix is divided into 7 strands, with 5 levels. Level 1 indicating little activity and level 5 a high level of action. There was general agreement from Members on which level the Council is currently achieving and to which level it was felt possible to aspire to in the next couple of years. The Group felt that one important strand was missing, that of Community Leadership, and it was agreed that this would be added to the matrix.

Informal discussions with other local authorities in Hertfordshire have indicated that on the whole all neighbouring authorities are at a largely comparable level.

- 4.6 The Climate Change Task and Finish Group is planning a 'scrutiny conference' for November 2008. A range of speakers covering the main themes of Climate Change as it affects East

Herts are to be invited. It is hoped that this will allow the opportunity to hear from a range of subject specialists and enable Members to develop a deeper insight into potential mitigation and adaptation policy actions. In addition a programme of site visits is also being finalised. Both events will be open to all Members.

4.7 It is the intention of the Task and finish Group to next report to the Environment Scrutiny Committee in March 2009. It is hoped that at that meeting the draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will be presented.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 No public or partner consultations were required during the preparation of this report.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 There are no known legal implications arising from this report at the current time.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no known financial implications arising from this report at the current time.

8.0 Human Resources Implications

8.1 There are no known human resources implications arising from this report at the current time.

9.0 Risk Management Implications

9.1 There are no known risk management implications arising from this report at the current time.

Background Papers

Notes of meetings of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group held on 9 May, 27 June and 25 July 2008.

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Strategic Carbon Embedding Matrix – Climate Change Task and Finish Group Score Assessment.

Strand	Current level (1 low + 5 high)	Aspire to
Corporate Strategy	2	Aim for 3 mid 2009 and aim for 4 in + 18 months
Monitoring and Evaluation	2	Aim for 3 in mid 2009 and aim for 4 after
Responsibility	2/3	Consolidate level 3 and aim for 4 in 2010
Data Management	3	Aim for 4 in 2009 Aim for 5 in 2010
Communication and Training	2	Aim fro 5 in 2010
Finance and Investment	1/2	Consolidate level 2 in this years capital programme
Policy Alignment	1/2	Consolidate 2