

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 3 MARCH 2009

REPORT BY CLIMATE CHANGE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

5. EAST HERTS DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY
AND ACTION PLAN

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

'D' RECOMMENDATION – that (A) the progress of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group in preparing a Draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan be noted; and

(B) the Committee be requested to comment on the Draft Strategy and Action Plan prior to public and stakeholder consultation.

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 presents the initial draft of the East Herts Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan as agreed by the Climate Change Task and Finish Group.

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities

The Draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 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 was to make informed recommendations for the development of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for East Herts Council.
- 3.2 At the meeting of the Committee on the 16 September 2008, the Chairman of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group provided an update on progress of the group's work following the first few meetings of the group.
- 3.3 The Task and Finish Group has now met eight times, with the most recent meeting having been held on 9 February 2009. Meetings have reviewed existing progress in carbon reduction by the Council and considered the wide range of legislation and formal guidance for local authorities affecting the need for development of Climate Change policy and initiatives. The Task and Finish Group has recognised the particularly wide ranging nature of Climate Change issues in terms of service provision and policy and its cross cutting nature and implications for the community of East Herts.
- 3.4 The group has looked at both the *mitigation* of (the reduction of CO² emissions) and *adaptation* to climate change (the modification of policy/service provision in response to changing climate conditions). In particular the group has learnt that the District of East Hertfordshire has one of the highest carbon footprints per capita in the Country and that data (published by Defra 2008) suggests that CO² emissions are increasing year on year within the District across all sectors. The Task and Finish Group feel that this confirms the need for a challenging and robust Climate Change Policy and Action Plan.
- 3.5 The Task and Finish Group held an open meeting in December 2008, to which a range of expert witnesses were invited to attend to present their ideas on actions to help reduce carbon emissions. This meeting demonstrated the range of activity with which different local organisations are involved and highlighted the

particular need for the District to show leadership in climate change as well as the ongoing need for education and awareness.

- 3.6 The group has also undertaken a study tour looking at an example of low carbon input farming practices and visited a neighbouring authority's offices to see alternative energy and building cooling measures in use.
- 3.7 Specific workshops have also been held with young people as well as the town and parish councils, in order to gain the input of these groups into the development of the Strategy.
- 3.8 In addition to the establishment of the member level Task and Finish Group, two officer level groups were created to progress the work of the Member Group and to contribute to the preparation of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. These were the:
 - Strategy Group, and the
 - Operations and Implementation Group.

4.0 Report

- 4.1 The Climate Change Task and Finish Group has studied a large range of data on carbon emissions; discussed wide ranging examples of good practice from elsewhere; and, considered a raft of potential mitigation and adaptation measures for inclusion in the draft Action Plan. The group has distilled this information into the attached draft Climate Change Strategy (Appendix 'A' to this report on pages 5. 7 - 5. 35) and Action Plan (Appendix 'B' to this report on pages 5. 36 - 5. 70).
- 4.2 The draft Climate Change Strategy identifies the clear aim of the need to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases in the District. It recognises the key role that East Herts has to play as community leader and of the need to develop a range of actions to ensure that the Council acts not only as an exemplar but also is able to fulfil its obligations under national climate change legislation and in reporting the Government's national indicators on CO².
- 4.3 The Strategy sets out 10 key objectives and identifies two principle targets namely that the Council works toward achieving the Hertfordshire wide agreed target of a 9.1% reduction in CO²

emissions by 2011/12 and strives to aspire to a 25% reduction in CO² emissions from its own functions by 2020.

- 4.4 The document also aims to provide a briefing on the nature, challenges and impact of climate change in East Herts. It is proposed that alongside the main strategy document a shorter leaflet outlining the key targets and objectives is produced as part of the planned stakeholder consultation process.
- 4.5 Accompanying the Strategy is a draft Action Plan. Actions within this document are set out in five broad themes namely:
- Action on Management of Land and Buildings;
 - Action on Transport;
 - Action on Procurement and Waste;
 - Action on Land Use and Building Control; and,
 - Action on Education, Promotion and Corporate policy.
- 4.5.1 The Action Plan is a working document and further initiatives are in preparation. It is expected that following the period of public and stakeholder consultation in the early summer additional actions will be proposed.
- 4.5.2 In addition it should be appreciated that the existing East Herts Energy Policy and Action Plan and the emerging East Herts Transport Strategy (currently in development) are closely allied documents to the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, and therefore many actions within the Energy Action Plan have not generally been reproduced within the Climate Change Action Plan.
- 4.5.3 Many of the actions within the Action Plan have yet to be rigorously costed and evaluated in terms of a business case. However, the Task and Finish Group is keen to see as many actions as possible undertaken. It also recognises that a number of the actions, though potentially substantial in themselves could ideally be considered for implementation during the Changing the Way We Work (C3W) process. This includes a number of the proposals related to building refurbishment.
- 4.5.4 Actions have been broadly assessed in terms of carbon saving, cost and timescale. It is recommended that higher carbon saving / lower cost actions are considered for adoption first, alongside the range of identified quick wins.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 During the initial development of the draft Strategy and Action Plan meetings have been held with a number of Stakeholder Groups including, young people, parish and town councils and local environment groups so that their thoughts can be included at an early stage.

5.2 One of the key elements of developing the Climate Change Strategy is its use in building a local consensus for action with the local community and key stakeholder groups. Thus the period of public and stakeholder consultation planned for the spring and early summer will be an important vehicle to facilitate this. It is also proposed that Climate Change forms one of the themes for the June/July round of Community Voice.

5.3 It is suggested that the Task and Finish Group reconvene in late July to analyse the results of the consultation exercise.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 There are no specific 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. However, any actions within the draft Action Plan will be subject to financial and business case evaluation in the future before they are implemented, in the event that they cannot be resourced from within existing budgets.

8.0 Human Resources Implications

8.1 There are no known human resources implications arising from this report at the current time. However, if necessary any action within the draft Action Plan will be subject to appropriate review and consultation before implementation.

9.0 Risk Management Implications

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

Background Papers

Minutes of the meetings of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee held on 10 June and 16 September 2008.

Notes of meetings of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group held on 9 May, 27 June, 25 July, 22 September, 3 November, 8 December 2008 and 12 January and 9 February 2009.

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