

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15 SEPTEMBER 2009

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE TASK AND
FINISH GROUP

9. EAST HERTS CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

'D' RECOMMENDATION – that (A) the findings of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group be endorsed; and

(B) the draft East Herts Climate Change Policy and Action Plan be commended to the Executive for approval.

1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 This report provides an update on the outcome of the public consultation on the Draft East Herts Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and presents the final version of the 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 meetings of the Committee held on the 16 September 2008 and 3 March 2009, the Chairman of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group provided an update on the progress of the work of the Group and at the latter meeting presented a Draft version of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for East Herts.
- 3.3 The Task and Finish Group has now met nine times, with the most recent meeting having been held on 3 August 2009 in order to review the outcome of the period of public consultation. The Group has 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 carbon dioxide emissions are increasing year on year within the District across all sectors. The Task and Finish Group felt that this confirmed the need for a challenging and robust Climate Change Policy and Action Plan.

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 Action Plan. The Group has distilled this information into the attached Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan at Appendix A to this report on pages 9.8 - 9.68. Both documents have been subject to a 3 month period of stakeholder consultation, which is detailed in Section 5.0 of this report.
- 4.2 The Climate Change Strategy identifies the clear aim 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 legalisation and in reporting the Government's national indicators on carbon dioxide emissions.
- 4.3 The Strategy sets out 10 key objectives and identifies two main targets namely that the Council works toward achieving the Hertfordshire wide agreed target of a 9.1% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2011/12 and strives to aspire to a 25% reduction in carbon dioxide 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.
- 4.5 Accompanying the Strategy is an 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 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 actions within the Energy Action Plan have not generally been reproduced within the Climate Change Action Plan.

- 4.5.2 Many of the actions within the Action Plan have yet to be fully 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.
- 4.5.3 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 were held with a number of Stakeholder Groups including, young people, parish and town councils and local environment groups so that their thoughts could be included at an early stage. Parishes and town councils also had the opportunity to comment at a Rural Conference earlier this year and these comments were included in the original draft.
- 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. With this in mind a three month period of public and stakeholder consultation was undertaken during May, June and July 2009. Key highlights of the consultation included:
- 430 hard copies of the Strategy and Action Plan together with a questionnaire were distributed
 - 200+ downloads from the East Herts website of the Strategy and Action Plan Documents
 - 79 completed Consultation questionnaires returned, please see Appendix B on pages 9.69 - 9.71.
 - Presentations given at 5 Community Voice meetings during June/July. Post it note exercises were undertaken at each

meeting. Feedback from the Community Voice meetings was very positive

- Copies of the document were also distributed to schools and the East Herts Youth Council, though no specific comments were received.
- A number of organisations /interested individuals have indicated their interest in forming an East Herts Climate Change Network to help facilitate local community action.

5.3 Overwhelmingly feedback from the consultation exercise and the Community Voice meetings was supportive of the Draft Policy and Action Plan and of the Council's approach to Climate Change in general. In particular responses highlighted the need for strong local leadership on Climate Change and the need for continuing local awareness and publicity. The role of individuals and the social networks to which people belong was also recognised, along with the Council's role in facilitating action at a local level.

Those attending the Community Voice almost entirely agreed that it is very important that Climate Change is tackled, but there was a wider spread on how well generally people felt they were informed about the topic.

5.4 At both Community Voice and in the wider consultation the public were asked to indicate what they perceived as the 'big' Climate Change issues. Transport, energy, health concerns and habitat changes were seen as the key issues, closely followed by flooding, water supply and economic effects. In terms of specific actions a very wide range of ideas were put forward and for the most part these were already in the draft Action Plan or had already been discussed by the Task and Finish Group. Those mentioned most frequently included the importance of gully cleansing; a demonstration project/ exhibition possibly in a town centre to highlight Climate Change issues; transport modal shift; road speed enforcement; energy efficiency, grants and renewables; improvements to building regulations; community car share schemes and public transport; differential car park pricing according to vehicle size; and waste minimisation measures. Many of the issues raised are not necessarily the direct responsibility of East Herts Council, but demonstrate the important need for partnership working in relation to Climate Change activity.

5.5 The Task and Finish Group reviewed the draft Climate Change Policy and Action Plan in the light of the outcome of the stakeholder consultation. The Group agreed that only minor amendments were required and these have been incorporated into the draft Policy and Action Plan appended to this report. Specifically the amendments made principally concerned the following:-

- The Group agreed that 10 objectives listed in the Policy document be reordered to reflect the importance of Education and Awareness;
- That in terms of the policy objective on Energy, that domestic energy efficiency is emphasised;
- That in Section 4.0 of the Action Plan, relating to Land Use Planning and Building Control, that the role of Building Control and the Building Regulations in reducing carbon emissions is recognised; and,
- That the need to read the Climate Change Policy and Action Plan in conjunction with the Council's existing Energy Policy and Action Plan is emphasised.

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 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, 16 September 2008 and 3 March 2009.

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.

Feed back from Community Voice meetings held in June/July 2009 on Climate Change.

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