

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview & Scrutiny Committee **DATE:** 12th July, 2011

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PART I **FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report highlights the progress to date in implementing and developing the Climate Change Action Plan.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to note and comment on the following planned actions:
- a) The development of a Climate Change Action Plan;

3 Community Strategy Priorities

- 3.1 Slough Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) sets out the ambitions and aspirations for Slough. It recognises that the Council, in partnership with Slough Forward, has a key role to play in leading and enabling a rapid improvement in the energy efficiency and carbon emissions from the borough's transport, homes and economy. It also commits the Partnership to lead the city's adaptation to the impacts of climate change.
- 3.2 This Strategy sets out the strategic framework in which the Council and Slough Forward will tackle the Council's corporate priority of climate change. It directly contributes to the delivery of the SCS priority '**A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play**' by:
- Improving public spaces
 - Creating a strong culture of recycling: by recycling 60% of waste by 2028
 - Improving energy efficiency: by reducing CO₂ emissions by 20% by 2028
 - Promoting sustainable public transport: all public transport and Council's vehicles to run on cleaner fuel by 2028
- 3.3 This report also takes into account the following additional policies and strategies of the Council:

Strategic Plan

- Reduce the impact of climate change on the Borough

Carbon Management Plan 2009 – 2014

- To reduce the amount of energy used and CO₂ emissions produced across the Councils own estate (including schools and leisure centres) by 40%, or 12,616 tonnes of CO₂, off a 2008/09 baseline of 31,540 tonnes of CO₂, by April 2014.

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

There is currently no specific budget for climate change activity. Activities under this Strategy will be built into the existing business planning of the Directorates concerned and where possible be delivered from existing resources. This report does not therefore ask for additional funding. However the Strategy will require acceptance of potential spend to save activity. Should funding be required, separate capital bids would be submitted. In addition, external funding will be sought wherever possible. Working in partnership through the Partnership has the potential to maximise future funding opportunities for the Council.

(b) Risk Management

There is a risk implication in not addressing climate change issues. Impacts of climate change can affect many of the services that the Council provides. In order for the Council to continue to provide services in the borough we have to take steps to reduce our contribution to climate change.

There is also a risk that without a Strategy the Council will not be able to future proof its delivery of essential services and functions and protect residents from the threat of climate change. There is also the risk that with a Strategy the Council will fail to meet its Nottingham Declaration commitments or local and national carbon reduction targets. These risks are being mitigated by:

- Effective management of the climate change and carbon management work programmes and projects with adherence to the Council's risk management process;
- We will increase our ability to deliver the scale of change by developing partnerships - and the Strategy makes specific proposals for this,
- consulting widely on the Action Plan to ensure that it represents the best possible plan; and
- working with Slough Forward and its' Climate Change PDG to develop the Strategy further with a strong evidence base.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications.

The Climate Change Act 2008 is referred to in this report. Among other things (e.g. certain amendments to waste management law) it establishes a framework with legal powers designed to enable the United Kingdom to manage and respond to climate change. As a body with functions of a public nature Slough Borough Council is a "Reporting Authority" within the meaning of the Climate Change Act. This means that the Council (either alone or jointly with other reporting authorities) can

expect to be directed by the Secretary of State to report how it is assessing and acting on risks and opportunities from a changing climate.

As a signatory of the Nottingham Declaration, the Council agreed to prepare a draft Strategy and Action Plan which will address our commitments to tackling climate change and adapting to its impacts.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

Major projects identified in the Strategy and its supporting Action Plan have been or will be subject to Equalities Impacts Assessments as part of their development, led by the appropriate project/programme manager.

(e) Workforce

None.

5. Supporting Information

5.1 Background

- 5.1.1 Climate change is defined as long term change in climate. Research shows that this change is increasing at a rate faster than previously recorded and this is causing the earth's temperature to increase, rising sea levels; and extreme weather conditions. One of the chief causes of climate change is the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) produced by humans. In October 2006, the Stern Review Report looked into the economics of climate change and concluded that the cost of doing nothing would far outweigh the cost of taking action now. It estimated that inaction could account for a 20 per cent loss in global GDP, but that by taking action now the worst impacts could be avoided and limited to costs of 1 per cent.
- 5.1.2 The Nottingham Declaration acknowledged that climate change will have far reaching effects on the UK; recognises the benefits of combating climate change and accepts that local authorities have a central role to play in leading society's response to the challenge of climate change.
- 5.1.3 Signatories to the Declaration are committed to contributing to the UK's Climate Change Programme, to participate in local and regional networks for support; to develop plans within 2 years of signing that address the causes and impacts of climate change, to declare, via plans and strategies, their commitment to achieve a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, to assess the risks associated with climate change and to monitor progress of plans against actions and publish the results.
- 5.1.4 Slough Borough Council signed the Nottingham Declaration in August 2009 and has produced a Climate Change Strategy that indicates the Council's and Slough Forward's commitment towards playing their part in reducing climate change and adapting to its impacts.

5.2 Strategic Links

- 5.2.1 The Government sees local authorities playing an important role in dealing with climate change, as it stated in the Local Government White paper 2006. Local authorities are uniquely placed to provide vision and leadership and through our powers and services to support action by businesses, individuals and communities.
- 5.2.2 In 2006 the UK became the first country to adopt a Climate Change Act. Under the Act, the UK is legally obliged to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 from a 1990 baseline and the first carbon budgets have committed the UK to reduce emissions by 34% by 2022.
- 5.2.3 The Committee on Climate Change estimates that the private and public sectors could save almost £900 million and 9 million tonnes of CO₂ a year through cost effective measures. Coupled with the worsening UK economy and the need to cut costs, improving energy efficiency present a major opportunity for the Council to invest, thereby supporting both its economic and environmental agendas.

5.3 Climate Change Strategy Document

- 5.3.1 In developing our Climate Change Strategy, Slough Borough Council consulted with other Councils to identify the activities they were undertaking and considered those that would be appropriate to Slough and its strategic partnership. Various local businesses and environmental organisations were also consulted, as well as all the internal services, with particular emphasis on flooding, waste, recycling, planning, transport and facilities management.
- 5.3.2 A Climate Change Strategy Summary document was published for consultation to the local residents in the autumn of 2010. Comments and feedback were received from consultees. The responses were varied with a number of positive elements, some negative comments and a large number of other ideas for consideration. A thorough analysis of the comments was carried out and a number of items were identified as feasible for immediate inclusion. Several have been identified as 'for information' and a large number are being subjected to a more in-depth review for possible inclusion in future developments of the Strategy and its forthcoming supporting Action Plan.
- 5.3.3 The Climate Change Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 14th March 2011 and published 28th March 2011. It sets out the strategic direction required to meet national and local targets for reducing carbon emissions internally, across the wider community, and how we can adapt to severe weather events and future climatic change.
- 5.3.4 As a signatory of the Nottingham Declaration, the Council committed to producing a Climate Change Strategy, developing a corresponding Action Plan and monitoring and reporting progress on the plan. Developing and implementing a Climate Change Strategy for Slough aims to reduce the long terms costs likely to accrue and provides a template and processes for key partners, businesses and partners to follow. The development of a supporting Action Plan will also provide the Council with the means to identify monitor and report on the work required and undertaken across the partnership to deliver the improvements needed to tackle climate change.

5.4 Action Plan Development

5.4.1 The Action Plan will outline the ways in which Slough Forward and the Council will try to limit the effects of climate change by lowering carbon dioxide emissions across the Borough and across their own operations. It will outline how the Council and the Partnership will work with members and the community to lower their emissions and to start preparing for the impacts of climate change. This Action Plan will address both mitigation and adaptation.

5.4.2 The Climate Change Partnership Delivery Group will be looking at the following areas to identify where improvements to climate change can be made and influenced at a local level. These will include:

- Various feasibility studies
- Addressing transport and air quality issues
- Impact of Small Medium Enterprises on our local climate
- LoCUS Project (Low Carbon Understanding for Small Businesses)
- Liaising with Berkshire Climate Board
- Working with voluntary groups
- Working with our own Carbon Management Board and Assets Management Team

5.4.3 Objectives:

- Work with central government, partners and the community to contribute, at a local level, to the delivery of the UK climate change programme
- Work with key providers, including the health community, emergency services, businesses and development organisations, to assess the potential effects of climate change on our communities and to identify ways in which we can adapt
- Assess the Partnerships and the Council's carbon footprint, evaluate measures to reduce it and achieve significant reductions of emissions across the Partnership, the borough and from all of Slough Borough Council's operations
- Encourage all sectors in the local community to reduce their own carbon footprints and to make public their commitment to action

5.4.4 Performance monitoring

Progress on the delivery of this Plan will be reported through Slough Forward Partnership, LSP Climate Change PDG, Carbon Management Board and Overview & Scrutiny. Thereafter it will form part of the Council's performance management framework. Where practical targets will be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely).

5.4.5 Updating the Action Plan

This Action Plan will be updated on an ongoing basis.

6. Comments of other Committees

None.

7. Conclusion

Slough Borough Council is committed, via the Nottingham Declaration, to produce Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan by August 2011. The Climate Change Strategy has been published and the Action Plan is currently under development with our strategic partners.

8. Background Papers

None.