

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE-COMMUNITY

5 JUNE 2007

EXECUTIVE

19 JUNE 2007

DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY (2007 – 2017)

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents a draft Climate Change Strategy for Exeter and seeks Scrutiny Committee support and Executive approval for the Strategy.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The evidence for climate change is now indisputable. Recent floods, storms and droughts, both here and abroad, illustrate how vulnerable we are to extremes of climate and illustrate the high human, environmental and economic costs involved. The UK Government is seeking to cast in statute a mandatory 60% cut in the UK's carbon emissions by 2050 (compared to 1990 levels), with an intermediate target of a 26-32% cut by 2020 (draft Climate Change Bill 2007). Sir Nicholas Stern's Review on the Economics of Climate Change (October 2006) provides compelling environmental and economic reasons to address climate change and emphasises the urgent need for sustained long-term action. The Local Government White Paper also stresses the pivotal role that local government has in achieving sustainable development and mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- 2.2 Exeter City Council, working in partnership with others, in particular Exeter Vision, has an important role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions - both in the way it runs its own business and as a leader of the community. The Council has demonstrated a commitment to doing so by signing the Nottingham and Devon Wide Declarations on Climate Change, both of which include a commitment to prepare a plan to address the causes and effects of climate change.
- 2.3 The Council's initial approach to tackling climate change is set out in the Environmental Strategy 2007-2012 (subject of a separate report to this committee), which covers areas such as energy conservation, waste minimisation, sustainable transport, sustainable construction etc. However, to be successful in meeting the challenge that climate change presents far greater action is needed. For this reason, the draft Climate Change Strategy, covering the period 2007-2017 has been prepared. A copy of the strategy is available on the Intranet with a hard copy in the Members' Room.

3 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

- 3.1 The draft Climate Change Strategy sets out key proposals for how the Council, working with others, in particular Exeter Vision, can take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions within Exeter by 30% by 2020 (from 1990 levels). This will allow Exeter to make its full contribution to national targets in this area. The strategy

proposes five policy areas (themes) for action: energy, transport, waste, community leadership and adapting to the effects of climate change. The proposals that Members may wish to be particularly aware of at this stage are highlighted below:

- a) To sponsor research (see Financial Implications) into the scope for decentralised and renewable energy across Exeter and, according to the results of that study, to consider the creation of a local Energy Services Company (ESCO) in partnership with an energy provider. This research will be undertaken in collaboration with partners in the New Growth Point Initiative. An ESCO might, for example, be involved in identifying sites, designing, financing, building, owning and operating local decentralised energy systems for both new and existing development in the Exeter sub-region. The ESCO concept is well established in parts of Europe and there is growing interest in the UK. The Mayor of London for example has recently entered into partnership with EDF Energy to establish a London-wide ESCO. Meanwhile, Woking Borough Council have successfully developed an ESCO (Thameswey Energy Ltd) for the provision of local and sustainable energy services to tenants of residential areas, community buildings and sheltered housing.
- b) Prior to the formal adoption of the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework (expected late 2008), to introduce supplementary planning guidance, which will require compliance with Policy CP16 of the Core Strategy 'Preferred Options'. This would require all larger-scale new developments and conversions to incorporate on-site renewable energy equipment to reduce predicted CO₂ emissions by at least 10%. In addition, the appropriateness of introducing carbon-offsetting arrangements, implemented as part of Section 106 agreements, will be explored. The proceeds from this would be used entirely to invest in sustainable transport and energy initiatives within Exeter.
- c) To use parking policy to encourage the use of public transport and other sustainable travel modes. In particular, the strategy suggests the introduction of a small, additional 'carbon offset' levy on city centre off-street car park charges. The proceeds from this levy would be used transparently and entirely to fund additional sustainable transport and energy initiatives within Exeter. The range of activities that might be supported through this fund could include:
 - Additional grants/financial contributions to local residents for better home insulation, to encourage the adoption of renewable energy technologies and the replacement of inefficient boiler and heating systems.
 - Additional investment in public transport facilities or services and further investment in walking and cycling facilities.
 - Increased investment in green spaces and tree planting.
- d) To explore mechanisms for encouraging the ownership of more carbon-efficient cars. A possible mechanism for doing this could be to encourage the Highway Authority to introduce differential charging for on-street car parking such that those cars deemed to have high carbon dioxide emissions pay a higher fee for a residents' parking permit than those with more efficient vehicles. This would follow the model recently introduced in the London Borough of Richmond.
- e) To consider using licensing requirements to encourage taxi and private hire operators to invest in increased carbon efficiency across their fleet. Woking Borough Council is currently consulting with stakeholders on such an initiative.

- f) To sponsor an independent review (see 'Financial Implications') of the information and advice facilities, resources and other skills, support and services available to Exeter business and residents in relation to climate change. Where unmet need is identified or where limitations in the supply of services is revealed, the City Council and Exeter Vision will lead on proposing additional services. In addition, the strategy outlines a desire to work with other significant organisations in Exeter (eg Exeter University, the Meteorological Office and EDF) to deliver flagship case study projects focused on the practical application of the latest research techniques and scientific understanding in relation to climate change.
- g) To raise awareness of climate change and encourage local people to reduce their carbon emissions. In support of this, the Council has the opportunity to sign up to Sustainability South West's principle of 'a globally fair and safe carbon share for everyone' and to promote this principle to Council staff and local people through the *Fair Shares Fair Choice* programme. This is a web-based resource (www.fairsharesfairchoice.com) that encourages people to live and work within a 'fair share' of carbon, which could enable the worst effects of climate change to be avoided.
- h) Building on previous initiatives, the Council will work with the Carbon Trust, through the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme, to calculate a baseline carbon footprint for the Council's operations and, in turn, prioritise measures to reduce the Council's greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, transport and waste production. Progressive implementation of these measures will lead to the Council meeting an aspiration of becoming a carbon neutral authority.

Next Steps

- 3.2 The draft strategy sets out the key themes that need to be addressed to tackle climate change in Exeter over the next decade. In addition to the research and review activity highlighted above (proposals a and f) the policy themes in the draft strategy will be subject to independent expert analysis to better understand the contribution that each might make to the government's target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 30% by 2020 (from 1990 levels). This review will also critique the scope, feasibility, focus and value-for-money of proposals to date and offer practical suggestions for their enhancement. The results of all analytical work strands are expected to be available by late Autumn.
- 3.3 The above research activity will be complemented by the outcomes of a public consultation exercise, which will take place between July and September 2007, and will provide feedback from residents and businesses on the draft proposals. Consultation will be conducted by a variety of means, including focus groups, exhibitions and a survey of the Wavelength panel.
- 3.4 A parallel process of consultation will be undertaken with members of Exeter Vision and key agencies, to explore opportunities for partnership working and build ownership of the strategy. The results of the consultation and research activities will feed in to the preparation of a final Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, for Member endorsement in January 2008.

4 NOTICE OF MOTION

- 4.1 In accordance with Standing Order No. 6, Councillor D J Morrish submitted a Notice of Motion on 20 February 2007 regarding the need for a Climate Change Officer, which was referred to Scrutiny Committee-Community for consideration. The Notice of Motion in full is:

"That this Council accepts its responsibilities for meeting the challenge posed to our society by the impact of Climate Change and therefore resolves that:-

- (1) the Executive and Scrutiny Committees give urgent consideration to the appointment of a Climate Change officer who will occupy a senior position and have overall responsibility for Climate Change Policy; and*
- (2) the Climate Change officer will:-*
 - (a) in co-operation with other Council officers be responsible for advising Members on the policies, both international and national, which are already in place and this Council's expected and necessary response;*
 - (b) advise Members on the targets we need to achieve and monitor our performance; and*
 - (c) report to each regular meeting of the Executive and submit an annual report to Members.*

- 4.2 In response to this, although the Council does not have a post specifically named Climate Change Officer, the Environmental Co-ordinator and Energy Manager spend a significant amount of time on climate change work, in addition to others with linked responsibilities, for example the Principal Environmental Health Officer for Private Sector Housing and Home Energy Conservation Act. Planning Services have also designated a lead officer for sustainability in the Development Control Team. Therefore the need for a Climate Change Officer is not considered necessary at this point in time, but will be reviewed in light of the research and analysis process described above.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Financial resources of £25,000 will be required in 2007/08 to fund the independent review of the climate change-related information services available, as identified in Section 3.1 (proposal f), and the independent analysis of the policy themes (see section 3.2). Research into the scope for decentralised and renewable energy across Exeter identified in section 3.1 (proposal a), will be undertaken in collaboration with partners in the New Growth Point Initiative. A contribution of £10,000 from the Planning Delivery Grant to fund joint work with the New Growth Point has already been agreed. Members should be aware that the investment outlined in this report represents the first stage in the development of an evidence-based strategic approach to tackling climate change in Exeter. The longer-term financial and organisational implications will become clearer as work on the strategy and background research progresses over the coming months.

6 RECOMMENDED

- (1) that Scrutiny Committee - Community supports and Executive approves the draft Climate Change Strategy, including the target for carbon reduction.
- (2) that Executive agrees a supplementary budget of £25,000 for the work detailed in section 5.1 above.
- (3) that following consultation on the approved draft strategy that the final strategy and action plan be presented to the Executive in January 2008.
- (4) that general progress towards meeting the aims of the Strategy be monitored on an annual basis and reported to Scrutiny Committee - Community.
- (5) that a commitment be made to undertaking a full review of the Strategy in ten year's time.
- (6) That the Council signs up to Fair Shares Fair Choice.

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

S:LP/Committee/607SCC4

22 May 2007

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:**