
Meeting: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 26 July 2012
Subject: Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan
Report of: Cllr Nigel Young, Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Strategic Planning and Economic Development and Cllr Maurice Jones Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Summary: The report provides an update of the progress made in implementing the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan and proposes how the Council can continue to demonstrate its commitment to tackling climate change and becoming more energy efficient.

Advising Officer: Richard Fox Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy
Contact Officer: Stephen Mooring, Corporate Policy Adviser (Sustainability & Climate Change)
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. Taking positive and proactive steps to tackle climate change demonstrates leadership and contributes to the delivery of all the Council's priorities, particularly in relation to enhancing Central Bedfordshire – creating jobs, managing growth, protecting our countryside and enabling businesses to grow.

Financial:

2. Failure to take action will leave the Council vulnerable to substantial costs, from inefficiencies in dealing with climate change and from fines (see paragraph 4 below). The current energy spend is £4.3 million and could rise as high as £5.4 million by 2016 (based on Ofgem prediction of energy price rise of 60% between 2009 and 2016).
3. The Council will be subject to the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC), which will cost the Council approx. £360k p.a. from 2014/15 based upon the carbon emissions from the Council's corporate estate and schools. The CRC scheme itself is currently going through consultation to simplify how it works, this means that it is not yet clear how emissions for schools and Academies will be handled in the future and whether the Council will be responsible for these.

Legal:

4. The Climate Change Act places a legal duty on all public authorities to plan for the impacts of climate change, to ensure that their areas are resilient and prepared for the impacts of a changing climate. This Act also implements the CRC Energy Efficiency scheme, which the Council will be legally required to participate in. This also has strict financial penalties for organisations who fail to participate in or maintain accurate supporting evidence.

Risk Management:

5. Central Bedfordshire will not be immune to the impacts that a changing climate will have. The Council will need to act now to adapt and to manage the risks to service delivery, local communities, local infrastructure, businesses and the natural environment. Failure to take action on this agenda will also present the Council with financial risks, primarily through the increase in fuel costs and impact of the CRC, along with the reputational risk of not robustly tackling this issue. Where risks have been identified they will be managed through Directorate and Service Risk Registers.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

6. If the Council is to achieve a reduction in its carbon footprint, staff and members will need to be involved and act. Based on best practice from other Local Authorities targeting staff with a robust green awareness campaign could reduce energy use in the Council's buildings, excluding schools, by up to 5%, which equates to a saving of approximately £35,000. The medium term accommodation plan, which includes the reduction in buildings and new ways of working (including video and teleconferencing) will also help reduce the council's carbon footprint.

Equalities/Human Rights:

7. Public authorities have a statutory duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
8. The actions taken to implement the Climate Change Strategy, particularly those relating to cutting the Central Bedfordshire area's carbon footprint and preparing for the impacts of a changing climate will need be carried out in an inclusive manner. They will benefit those suffering from inequalities, for example domestic energy efficiency work being targeted at households suffering from fuel poverty and measures taken to mitigate against the impacts of a changing climate – such as extreme weather events and heat waves - protecting the elderly and other vulnerable groups.

Public Health

9. The impacts of a changing climate will result in more implications on the health and wellbeing of our communities. For example over heating can lead to excess summer deaths mainly of the elderly and vulnerable. The increase in energy costs will also have considerable impacts on our residents with more people falling into fuel poverty

10. Measures to reduce emissions, particularly through the use of more sustainable modes of transport, such as walking and cycling could also contribute to healthier and more active lifestyles.

Community Safety:

11. In addition to the issues highlighted in the Public Health assessment of this report (above) the increased risk and frequency of extreme weather events will place more pressure on the Council and emergency services. Implementation of the Strategy will contribute to ensuring that robust adaptation measures are put in place to limit or avoid these impacts.

Sustainability:

12. The Climate Change Strategy delivers on, or links strongly to key principles of sustainability which are living within environmental limits, ensuring a strong, healthy and just society, and achieving a sustainable economy.

Procurement:

13. The Council's procurement decisions will have an impact on CO₂ emissions either directly, as is the case with energy, further up the supply chain, or through embodied emissions from the manufacture of goods that are procured.
14. Existing procurement policies do consider the environmental credentials of potential suppliers and efficiencies lead by procurement help ensure that unnecessary procurement does not happen (the most environmentally sound approach). There is scope to better consider the environmental/carbon impact of what is being procured.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:-

1. **Review progress in relation to performance in delivering the Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan and comment on any specific aspects they consider to be appropriate in relation to the delivery of the plan during 2012/13.**
2. **To consider if Executive should be requested to sign up to the LGA's initiative, 'Climate Local' as a mechanism to reaffirm and deliver the Council's commitment to tackling climate change and reducing fuel bills..**

Introduction

15. Central Bedfordshire Council has a key role to play in mitigating climate change, both as a community leader and through the services we provide. The Council is also a considerable consumer of energy and a direct source of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions through our activities and buildings. The Council therefore needs to lead by example, demonstrate best practice, realise the efficiency savings associated with tackling this issue, and as a result, inspire business and residents in our area to take carbon reduction measures.
16. Central Bedfordshire will not be immune to the impacts of changing climate and will need to act now to adapt and manage risks to service delivery, the public, local communities, local infrastructure, businesses and the natural environment.

17. In June 2010 the Council adopted its first Climate Change Strategy. The Strategy sets out three key aims:
- Cutting the Council's own carbon footprint - Aim for a 35% reduction by 2015 and work towards an overall 60% reduction by 2020 (from the 2008/09 baseline).
 - Cutting Central Bedfordshire's Area emissions - Continue to work towards the last Local Area Agreement area emissions target of a 10.7% by 2011 and future targets.
 - Preparing for the impacts of climate change - Working towards achieving level 4 (top level) of National Indicator (NI)188 which required preparation for the impacts of a changing climate by 2012/13.
18. This report considers progress to date and details the possible future issues and next steps to be taken to realise the ambition shown in the Climate Change Strategy.

Cutting the Council's carbon footprint – Progress with the Carbon Management Plan

19. The carbon footprint for the first year of Central Bedfordshire's Council's operation (2009/10) was 35,600 tonnes of CO₂. This is typical for a unitary authority of the Council's size and includes emissions relating to energy use and transport from across the Council's Corporate estate, street lighting, outsourced services (such as waste collection and leisure), schools and business mileage.
20. The carbon footprint for 2011/12 has been measured at 30,400 tonnes of CO₂. This represents a decrease of 15% from 2009/10. Progress in relation to each of the core areas/source of emissions is detailed in Appendix A.
21. This is a challenging and broad area of work and there are a range of issues that will need to be actively addressed in the coming years in order to achieve the targets set out in the Climate Change Strategy. These include:
- (a) **Data quality:** The quality of energy data that is received from suppliers is variable at best, with many of the smaller sites and schools being billed based on estimated meter readings. The Council is rolling out automated meter reading equipment (AMR) across its own estate and is also offering this to schools via the schools invest-to-save fund. This will provide real time half-hourly energy use data, enabling quicker identification of anomalies and unnecessary energy usage. Accurate energy data will be particularly important when the Council enters the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) in April 2014. CRC adds a 10% uplift to any data based on estimated energy consumption.
 - (b) **Schools:** Schools represent a significant challenge given the number of them (135), budget constraints, the challenging nature of school buildings (e.g. their age and structure of buildings), and the changing face with regards to how schools are funded – particularly in relation to Academies. Currently emissions from schools make up 48% of our carbon footprint.

- (c) **Staff awareness and engagement:** The Carbon Management Plan recognises the significant contribution that staff awareness and engagement campaigns can have. The Carbon Trust state that simple awareness raising programmes can reduce energy use by up to 15% (although in the CMP we use a more conservative estimate of 5%), through staff taking small measures – like turning equipment and lights off when not in use.

Reducing the Central Bedfordshire area's carbon emissions

22. As well as reducing the Council's own carbon footprint and realising the efficiency savings associated with this, the Council also has a significant role in supporting the Central Bedfordshire area to also cut carbon and be more energy efficient. This is through many of the services the Council provides; ranging from the work done to tackle fuel poverty by Housing Services to the strategic planning of future growth and developments.
23. The carbon footprint for Central Bedfordshire area is monitored nationally by the Department for Energy & Climate Change (DECC). The most recent data (in Appendix B) relates to the period between 2005 and 2009. This indicates that CO₂ emissions dropped by 11% in this period, with the average carbon footprint of a Central Bedfordshire resident dropping from 7.8 tonnes to 6.8 tonnes per person. The target set in the last LAA was to achieve a 10.7% reduction in per capita CO₂ emissions by the end of 2010/11.
24. Figures for 2010 are expected this autumn and the downward trend is likely to continue, although it is unclear the extent to which the economic downturn has contributed to this trend. In reality, due to delays in the release of data by DECC we are unlikely to know whether this was achieved until the 2011 data is issued next year. National data released from 2011 indicates that this downward trend continues and the target is on course to be met.
25. There are a number of significant areas of work that play an important role in contributing to the reduction of Central Bedfordshire's Carbon footprint. These include:
- (a) **Planning for growth and the Development Strategy:** Future housing and job growth will have a significant impact on carbon emissions in Central Bedfordshire so robust planning policy is needed to ensure that this is managed properly. This is also an important mechanism to ensure that the homes that are built are energy efficient, whilst at the same time encouraging the improvement of Central Bedfordshire's existing housing. The Development Planning and Housing Strategy Team are currently preparing a new Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire covering the period to 2031. The draft strategy has a range of policies which require higher energy and water efficiency standards, and sustainable transport.
- (b) **Tackling fuel poverty and providing affordable warmth:** Tackling Fuel Poverty is a high priority within the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy. Under this priority, the Council has developed several initiatives which include:
- i) Active promotion of the Government's Warm Front scheme
 - ii) External funding to tackle fuel poverty was obtained three years ago from the former regional government. The scheme is known as

BALES (Bedfordshire and Luton Energy Scheme)

- iii) In December 2011, the Council were successful in obtaining £55,000 Dept of Health funding for the 'Warm Homes Healthier People' initiative over the winter months.
- iv) The Council are currently promoting a British Gas funded scheme to promote grants for solid wall insulation.
- (c) **The Green Deal:** The Green Deal is a new energy saving initiative being implemented through the Energy Act which comes in to place this autumn. Through this the government aims to provide a new finance framework to cover the upfront capital cost to carry out energy efficiency improvements to buildings via a low interest loan. The Council is currently exploring ways in which it can work with partners to ensure that the residents and businesses in Central Bedfordshire receive the maximum benefit from this scheme possible.
- (d) **The Green Economy:** The UK's legally binding target to reduce CO₂ emissions by 80% by 2050 will mean that in the coming years carbon reduction will be at the heart of ensuring businesses thrive and grow. This is creating opportunities for the development of new technologies, industries and services which will be strengthened by the introduction of the Green Deal.

Preparing for the impacts of the changing climate on Central Bedfordshire

- 26. Central Bedfordshire will not be immune to the impacts of climate change and the Council will need to act now to adapt and manage risks to service delivery, local communities, infrastructure, businesses and the natural environment.
- 27. In late 2010 the National Indicator Set, which included NI188, was removed. However the core of NI188 was based around identifying vulnerabilities and opportunities, and putting in place a plan with partners to address these. Preparation of the plan is the Council's legal duty under the Climate Change Act. The initial work on this has been focused around building the Councils' understanding of the potential future impacts.
- 28. LDA Design were commissioned to conduct a local climate change impact study to help define and understand the risks and opportunities in Central Bedfordshire. The study provides the evidence needed to inform and shape the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Plan, which will contribute to the preparation of the Development Strategy, corporate policies and to emergency planning. The study compliments the first national Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA), published in January 2012, by applying its methodologies and findings to a local level. The main risks identified are greater surface water flooding, pressure on water resources and more frequent overheating, more details are included in Appendix C:
- 29. The study used the most up to date evidence of the projected impacts of climate change to identify the most important risks and opportunities for Central Bedfordshire, providing a sound evidence base to inform the Development Strategy.

30. The study provides part of the information used to help inform site selection, protection and enhancement of the natural environment and policy supporting climate resilient developments. This is particularly in relation to standards for water conservation measures in new homes, and also policy aimed at improving water conservation standards in existing buildings and housing stock.

Conclusion and Next Steps

31. **Cutting the Council's Carbon Footprint** - Future plans will look to address the issues detailed above and build on the good progress made to date. This will include the following:
- (a) Measures on the Council's own corporate estate will continue to be identified and implemented through the Asset's Carbon Management Programme. The impact of the range of measures currently being implemented as part of the programme for 2010/11 and 2011/12 should start becoming evident in the energy consumption figures to be collected for the 2012/13 carbon footprint in May 2013. Until the medium and long term accommodation strategies are implemented, the number of buildings that this work can be focused on is restricted to those sites that we are confident will be retained by the council in the future.
 - (b) There will be the continued role out of support and measures for schools. This includes the invest-to-save fund, energy audits, EcoSchools advice and energy specific toolkits to support better energy management and also teaching of energy efficiency principals in the classroom.
 - (c) The Council will enter the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) in 2013/14. This places a significant incentive to vastly improve how the Council and School's manage energy, particularly in relation to the provision of timely and accurate data. In the first year it is estimated that CRC will cost the Council £360,000 in carbon allowances. This places a further financial imperative to reduce emissions.
32. **Reducing the Area's Carbon Emissions** – Future work will include progressing a range of policy documents including for example, the Development Strategy, Public Transport Strategy and Travel Plans and growing a green economy.
33. **The Council's Climate Change Adaptation Plan:** This will be developed over the coming year with the aim managing risks to Council services and our residents, and informing the direction of future policy and investment through corporate strategy.
34. **The Bedfordshire & Luton Local Resilience Forum:** The LDA Design study findings will contribute to emergency planning through the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Risk Register.

35. **Climate Local Initiative:** In June 2012 the LGA launched 'Climate Local'. This is an LGA initiative to drive, inspire and support Council action on a changing climate. The first step of benefiting from this is for the Council to sign a 'Local Climate Commitment', through which the Council would demonstrate its continuing commitment to address climate change and build upon its existing achievements. The initiative provides the Council with a good opportunity to highlight the progress made so far and demonstrate commitment to continuing to tackle this agenda. More details on Climate Local are provided in Appendix D.
36. If the Council signs up to this it will be required to set out what actions we intend to undertake locally to reduce carbon emissions and respond to changes in climate within our own operations, services and with our local community. We will also have to demonstrate how we plan to monitor our achievements and report on progress.
37. Signing up to the initiative will demonstrate the Council's strong leadership in tackling climate change and the financial benefits of cutting fuel bills and actively preparing for and reducing risk

Appendices:

- Appendix A – Breakdown of Central Bedfordshire Council's Carbon Footprint 2011/12 and overview of progress since 2009/10
- Appendix B – Central Bedfordshire CO₂ emissions for the period 2005 - 2009
- Appendix C – Central Bedfordshire Climate Change Risk Assessment – summary of key risks
- Appendix D - An overview of the LGA's Climate Local initiative

Background papers and their location: (open to public inspection)

Central Bedfordshire Council's Climate Change Strategy – June 2010

Central Bedfordshire Council's Carbon Management Plan (CMP) – November 2010

Central Bedfordshire Climate Change Adaptation Evidence Base – April 2012-06-26

All above documents are available at:

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/environment/natural-environment/climate-change-sustainability.aspx>

Central Bedfordshire School's Carbon Reduction Action Plan

This document is held electronically or in hard copy at Technology House, Bedford.