

Cabinet

20 June 2012

Climate Change Strategy



Report of Corporate Management Team

Ian Thompson, Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic Development

Councillor Neil Foster, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development

Purpose of the Report

1. To update and replace the previously agreed Low Carbon Masterplan with the new Durham County Climate Change Strategy and to agree a 6 week consultation period for the further development of the strategy.

Background

2. In December 2009 the Council agreed to set a carbon dioxide reduction target of 40% by 2020. It was agreed that this would be taken forward through the development of a Low Carbon Masterplan. This was agreed by Cabinet in 2010 and provided the background and strategic context for work on Climate Change and identified 10 key challenges where work should be focused.
3. Following a review of the Low Carbon Masterplan in 2011, it was decided to replace the plan with a new Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan which would be more all encompassing and would take into account the views of strategic partners. The new strategy is also intended to be complimentary to the County Durham Plan. The County Durham Plan runs until 2030 and will ultimately increase emissions through development. It is a key objective running through the Plan that development aim to ensure that resulting emissions are minimised. This is matched by key objectives within the Climate Change Strategy.

The Climate Change Strategy

4. The Climate Change Strategy (Appendix 2) sets out a clear vision and objectives that will take us towards a low carbon County and help us to meet the challenges posed by changes to the climate. It provides the vital link between the Sustainable Community Strategy and forthcoming Climate Change Delivery Plan. The strategy sets out seven key themes that are essential in creating a low carbon and resilient County. Each key theme has a vision and a series of high-level commitments that will form the basis of our Delivery Plan. The development of this strategy will also provide a framework to ensure that all future strategies and action plans of

the Council and its partners embed climate change and sustainability actions throughout.

5. Within the County Durham Partnership the work will be delivered primarily through the Environment Partnership which has Climate Change as one of its key themes. The Strategy in its current format has been agreed by the Climate Change Strategy group of the Altogether Greener Partnership.
6. The seven Key Themes agreed by the climate change strategy group are:
 - Public Sector Performance
 - Low Carbon Economy
 - Built Environment
 - Natural Environment
 - Transport and Infrastructure
 - Community Engagement
 - Impacts Beyond our Boundaries

Relevant sections and departments have been fully engaged in the development of the Key Themes and will contribute to the development of the Delivery Plan.

7. Climate Change adaptation is a key element that runs throughout these Themes as it impacts on all aspects of society.

Delivery

8. Following the adoption of the Climate Change Strategy, a County wide Delivery Plan with measurable and accountable actions based around each thematic area will be produced to deliver the key commitments outlined within the strategy. The Delivery Plan will be updated each year and will include short and medium term actions, with existing plans and strategies feeding into it. These actions will be monitored and reviewed by the Climate Change Steering Group and then reported to RED Management Team, the Altogether Greener Partnership and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Next Steps

9. It is intended that the strategy will now go out to formal consultation, through the Durham County Council Website, to the AAP's and more formally to Strategic Partners. It is envisaged that through the Strategy Consultation, partners will be engaged to work upon the Climate Change Delivery Plan. The consultation is provisionally scheduled to take place during August and September 2012.
10. Following the consultation, the Delivery Plan will be produced detailing specific actions and short-medium term targets will be outlined. This will be completed by January 2013 to tie in with our Covenant of Mayors reporting requirements.

Recommendation

11. That Cabinet agree the draft Strategy and agree to go out to consultation for 6 weeks.

Contact: Steve Bhowmick Tel: 0191 383 3236

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance –

None

Staffing –

The work will be delivered by existing staff and through filling vacant posts within the Sustainability and Climate Change Team in RED.

Risk -

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty –

The strategy will include the potential to address fuel poverty and rural issues such as hard to treat homes.

Accommodation –

None

Crime and Disorder –

None

Human Rights –

None

Consultation –

None

Procurement –

None

Disability Issues –

None

Legal Implications –

The UK Government has prepared legislation and targets for reducing carbon emissions. This Strategy and Delivery Plan will contribute to this target.