

Durham County Council – Altogether Better equality impact assessment form

NB: Equality impact assessment is a legal requirement for all strategies plans, functions, policies, procedures and services. We are also legally required to publish our assessments. You can find help and prompts on completing the assessment in the guidance from page 7 onwards.

Section one: Description and initial screening

Section overview: this section provides an audit trail.	
Service/team or section: Overview and Scrutiny, Assistant Chief Executive's Office	
Lead Officer: Overview and Scrutiny Manager	Start date: November 2012
<p>Subject of the Impact Assessment: (please also include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate)</p> <p>Reducing the Council's Carbon Emissions Scrutiny Review</p> <p>Cutting carbon emissions to mitigate the impact of climate change is a key objective in the Altogether Greener Section of the Council Plan 2012-16. As a local authority, Durham County Council is well placed to drive and influence emission reductions through the services it delivers and its regulatory and strategic functions. The Council has been part of the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme since May 2009, and has through its Carbon Management Plan, committed to reducing the carbon emissions from its own activities by a minimum of 40% by 2015.</p> <p>The scrutiny review was undertaken to assess whether the Council is on course to meet the following targets and objectives included in its Carbon Management Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To reduce CO₂ emissions by a minimum of 40% reduction from the Council's 2008/09 baseline of 104,000 tonnes by 2015. ➤ To deliver savings in energy costs of at least 20% against Business as Usual predictions by 2015. ➤ To quantify the direct carbon emissions from the Council's activities and allocate ownership of those emissions to Service Groupings and services by 2012 to allow emissions reduction targets and carbon budgets to be included in Service Plans and monitored by 2013. 	

- To create a 'low carbon culture' within the Council by raising awareness, providing formalised training and gaining support from staff and senior management.

Savings in CO₂ that count towards the Carbon Management Plan include savings arising from:

- Reductions in energy consumption as a result of better practices, improvements in efficiency of plant and equipment or using alternative sources of fuel.
- Renewable energy generation, where the energy is used on the site where it is produced, including when Feed in Tariff or Renewable Heat Incentives are claimed – biomass boilers, wind turbines, solar panels etc

The Review Group has considered the Council's Carbon Management Programme, its carbon emissions since 2008/09 and comparisons with other local authorities, energy costs, the capital projects being developed and implemented to help save energy and reduce emissions, the eco-champions network to promote environmentally positive behaviour, the school carbon reduction programme and the progress being made with regard to Service Groups taking responsibility for their own emissions. Evidence for the review was gathered via a Working Group in the form of presentations from Officers of Durham County Council.

The recommendations from the review are set out below:

Recommendation 1

That Cabinet notes the importance of a corporate and co-ordinated approach in relation to reducing carbon emissions. This approach is facilitated through the Council's Carbon Management Programme Board and in order to continue to fulfil this function, Service Groups should proactively engage with the Board to ensure a joined up and planned approach.

The Council's Carbon Management Programme Board provides a corporate and co-ordinated approach in relation to reducing carbon emissions. Members of the Carbon Capital and Revenue Project Boards are individually answerable to the Senior Responsible Officer for their areas of responsibility and delivery within the programme. The Carbon Capital Projects Board deals with the difficult, high cost solutions involving construction and new technology, and the Carbon Revenue Projects Board deals with the 'softer' options, such as School Carbon Reduction Programme, the Eco-Champions network and low cost solutions, such as more energy efficient working practices. Both Boards need to be updated on a regular basis on any work/strategies that are being progressed by Service Groups that could effect carbon emissions.

Recommendation 2

That in view of the recent increases in energy prices, the Council /Cabinet continues to explore opportunities to 'invest to save' that will result in significant reductions in energy consumption and carbon emissions and ultimately lead to savings and efficiencies. Consideration also needs to be given to whether schemes should be undertaken that provide the opportunity for large scale carbon reduction, but do not meet the usual financial pay back criteria.

The Council is, despite financial pressures, continuing to develop and undertake, through prudential borrowing, a number of 'invest to save' schemes, such as the Building Energy Efficiency Retrofits and the installation of biomass boilers, solar panels and an evaporative cooling system, to significantly reduce future energy costs and carbon emissions.

Many of the projects are new for local authorities such as Building Energy Efficiency Retrofit, and the past three years has been particularly challenging with regard to proving that the new concepts will work, finding the required funding and developing and procuring the technologies. Priority is currently being given to those projects which offer the best return on investment. As more projects are delivered typical pay back periods will increase.

Recommendation 3

That the Council's Elected Members be provided with detailed information on any trials/schemes in relation to street lighting in their area, prior to residents being notified.

Street Lighting accounts for over 18,000 tonnes of the Council's carbon emissions and energy costs of £4.1m. per annum. A number of initiatives are currently being trialled or investigated such as dimming, trimming and switching off, and an 'invest to save' bid is being developed to retrofit or replace as deemed necessary 41,000 street lights with LEDS and include them in a centrally managed system. The aim is to save in the region of 7,500 tonnes of carbon per year.

Members acknowledged that the trial/proposed schemes would make a significant contribution to meeting the 40% carbon reduction target and reduce energy costs, however they requested that ward councillors receive detailed information on any trial /scheme in relation to street lighting in their area as they were often the first port of call for queries or concerns from residents.

Recommendation 4

That the drive to recruit more eco champions to promote simple energy saving changes continues and that consideration be given to the possibility of providing Elected Members with information on the Council's Carbon Management Programme as part of the corporate induction programme and seeking volunteers from Elected Members to act as Eco Champions.

An Eco-Champions network has been established to raise awareness of how everyone can reduce carbon emissions through simple changes in their working practices such as using natural light whenever possible, opening window blinds, switching off lights. The network was re-organised and re-vitalised in March this year. The Champions now attend Management Teams, Service Groups, Tier 4 Manager meetings The number of Eco-Champions in the authority is increasing and the Sustainability, Carbon and Climate Change Team is still actively trying to recruit more volunteers and it may be that some Elected Members, may be after receiving some information on carbon reduction as part of their corporate induction, might be interested in volunteering to be champions.

Recommendation 5

That in relation to the need to reduce business travel, consideration be given to making more use of innovative technology such as skype, telephone conferencing, video conferencing and promoting the availability of 'hot desks' at council offices throughout the county.

The Council's business travel has increased. Comparisons between 2011/12 and 2012/13 for quarter 1 show that although some Service Groups have reduced their mileage, overall mileage has increased by 3.5%. The Council has set itself targets of reducing car business mileage for each Service Group by a minimum of 10% for 2012/2013 from a 2011/2012 baseline, and implementing a Grey Fleet Policy by March 2013. A grey fleet vehicle is one, which is employee owned and is used for work related journeys.

The policy will set out the Council's expectations with regard to business travel. The Council is currently encouraging the use of both private and pool bicycles. In May 2012, it published a cycling for business policy and guidance. Officers who use their own cycles are able to claim a mileage allowance of 15p per mile.

Making more use of innovative technology such as skype and telephone conferencing, and promoting the availability of the 'hot desks' at council offices throughout the county, could also help to reduce business mileage. Telephone and video conferencing are projects that the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, winner of the LGA Low Carbon Council Award 2012, has invested in. The Mytel telephone system which is currently being installed across the Council, allows telephone conference calls to be made. Hot desks are currently available at council offices at Barnard Castle, Consett, Crook, Durham, Seaham and Spennymoor.

Recommendation 6

That the Committee continues monitors the progress being made to achieve the Council's carbon reduction targets through the current quarterly performance monitoring reports and receives regular updates by members of Council's Sustainability, Carbon and Climate Change Team and Carbon Management Programme Board.

In line with the Council's Carbon Management Plan, all Heads of Service are now responsible for reducing emissions from their service. The 2012-16 Service Improvement Plans include actions to mitigate the impact of climate change by reducing carbon emissions. These actions are currently monitored corporately, on an exception basis, as part of the Council's quarterly performance reporting process. However, both the Carbon Management Programme Board and the Council's Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee need to receive regular detailed information on the progress being made by Service Groups.

Recommendation 7

That all staff and Elected Members be made aware of the Council's carbon reduction targets, the financial impact of energy use and the savings that can be made by using energy more effectively. This could be achieved through training sessions and the Council's performance appraisal scheme – focussing on staff actions/achievements that protect the County's environment and mitigate the effects of climate change.

As carbon management is the responsibility of every department and an integral part of the Council Plan, all staff need to be made aware of both the Council's and their own Service Group's targets, what the benefits are and how they can contribute to meeting these targets. A Managers' handbook is currently being developed by the Sustainability, Carbon and Climate Change Team to assist with process and ensure a consistent approach. It is scheduled for release in summer 2013. Arrangements are now in place for new staff to receive training on CO₂ reduction as part of their induction programme, organised by the Council's Human Relations and Organisation Development Section, however existing staff and newly elected councillors also need training/briefing.

Recommendation 8

That a systematic review of the report and progress should be undertaken six months after its consideration by Cabinet.

Who are the main stakeholders: General public / Employees / Elected Members / Partners/ Specific audiences/Other (please specify) –

Employees and Elected Members

Is a copy of the subject attached? Yes

If not, where could it be viewed?

Initial screening

Prompts to help you:

Who is affected by it? Who is intended to benefit and how? Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups? Is it likely to affect relations between different communities or groups, for example if it is thought to favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others? Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality?

Is there an actual/potential negative or positive impact on specific groups within these headings?

Indicate :Y = Yes, N = No, ?=Unsure

Gender	N	Disability	N	Age	N	Race/ethnicity	N	Religion or belief	N	Sexual orientation	N
--------	---	------------	---	-----	---	----------------	---	--------------------	---	--------------------	---

How will this support our commitment to promote equality and meet our legal responsibilities?

Reminder of our legal duties:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination & harassment
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good relations between people from different groups
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and taking account of someone’s disability, even where that involves treating them more favourably than other people
- Involving people, particularly disabled people, in public life and decision making

Positive benefits can be gained for younger/older, low income families for example single parents, pensioners and people with disabilities, through trying to tackle fuel poverty by the installation of renewable energy technologies.

What evidence do you have to support your findings?

The Review found that the Council was currently midway through its five year Carbon Management Programme and during those years has focussed its attention on building the foundations on which to reduce emissions in the future. It has reduced carbon emissions from its own activities by 9% from its 2008/09 baseline of 105,816 tonnes, against a target of 14% for the period. Emissions have decreased each year, and when compared with other local authorities in the north east, the Council is performing well. Unfortunately, the weak economic climate, coupled with the cold weather experienced during the past few years has slowed the CO₂ emission reduction nationally.

With regard to energy costs, the Council has saved more than £2.75 million in 2011/12, when compared to business as usual and is, despite financial pressures, continuing to develop and undertake, through prudential borrowing, a number of ‘invest to save’ schemes, such as the Building Energy Efficiency Retrofits and the installation of biomass boilers, solar panels and an evaporative cooling system. These schemes will significantly reduce future energy consumption and carbon emissions. Priority is currently being given to those projects which offer the best return on investment, however as more projects are delivered typical pay back periods will increase. A number of initiatives are currently being trialled or investigated in relation to street lighting such as dimming, trimming and switching off and an invest to save bid is being developed to retrofit and/or replace, as deemed necessary, 41,000 lights with LEDS and include them in a centrally managed system to save in the region of 7,500 tonnes of carbon per year.

An Eco-Champions network has been established to raise awareness of how everyone can reduce carbon emissions through simple changes in working practices. Reducing the Council’s business mileage and office energy consumption are two areas which the champions are currently focussing on.

In relation to business travel, the Council has set itself the target of reducing car business mileage by at least 10% in the current financial year. It is also looking to implement a Grey Fleet Policy and undertake a multi-skilling training programme for repairs and maintenance employees, which would reduce the amount of travelling between sites. Neighbourhood Services Service Plan also includes reviewing the possibilities for moving to alternative powered vehicles and providing fuel efficient pool vehicles at major depots. The Council is currently encouraging the use of both private and pool bicycles. In May 2012, it published a cycling for business policy and guidance. Officers who use their own cycles are able to claim a mileage allowance of 15p per mile.

Schools in the County account for approximately 54% of the emissions from Council buildings. Although the Council does not have direct control over the energy used in the county's schools and academies, their carbon savings count towards meeting the 40% carbon reduction target. The Council is also responsible for their carbon footprint through the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme (a mandatory carbon emissions trading scheme, which commenced in 2010 and applies to almost all local authorities as well as many private companies.) The School Carbon Reduction Programme (based on adapted resources from the national Carbon Trust best practice programme), is raising awareness of energy issues and carbon emissions. In 2012/13, 234 schools will receive support from the Programme, which should result in even greater savings, thus releasing for more funds for curricular resources or facilities.

With regard to energy consumption in new school buildings, the Council has achieved an outstanding BREEAM (British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) rating in respect of Brandon and Esh Winning Primary schools; the most sustainable buildings in the Council's property portfolio and a 'first' nationally.

In line with the Council's Carbon Management Plan, all Heads of Service are now responsible for reducing emissions from their service. All Service Groups list actions aimed at reducing the Council's carbon emissions in their 2012 -16 Service Improvement Plans, and for 2013/14 they will have carbon budgets for car business mileage and fleet mileage. The Service Improvement Plans for 2013 – 17 will also include targets and actions to reduce carbon emissions.

Decision: Proceed to full impact assessment – Impact assessments will be carried out for any projects emerging from the recommendations **Date:** November 2012

If you have answered 'No' you need to pass the completed form for approval & sign off.

Section two: Identifying impacts and evidence- Equality and Diversity

Section overview: this section identifies whether there are any impacts on equality/diversity/cohesion, what evidence is available to support the conclusion and what further action is needed.

	Identify the impact: does this increase differences or does it aim to reduce gaps for particular groups?	Explain your conclusion, including relevant evidence and consultation you have considered.	What further action is required? (Include in Sect. 3 action plan)
Gender			
Age			
Disability			
Race/Ethnicity			
Religion or belief	-		
Sexual orientation	-		

How will this promote positive relationships between different communities?

--

Section three: Review and Conclusion

Summary: please provide a brief overview, including impact, changes, improvements and any gaps in evidence.			
Action to be taken	Officer responsible	Target Date	In which plan will this action appear
Systematic review of all recommendations July 2013	Overview and Scrutiny Officer	July 2013	Overview and Scrutiny Service Improvement Plan
When will this assessment be reviewed?	Date: July 2013		
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?	No		
Lead officer – sign off:			Date: 17 th December 2012
Service equality representative - sign off:			Date:

Please email your completed Impact Assessment to the Equality team - equalities@durham.gov.uk.