

**1 May 2014**



**Climate Change Strategy and  
Delivery Plan – Response by  
Overview and Scrutiny**

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**Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with details of the Overview and Scrutiny response in relation to the Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan, which is going out to public consultation.

**Background**

2. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed as part of the refresh of the work programme for 2011/2012 to consider and comment upon the draft County Durham Climate Change Strategy, which met the objective of the Altogether Greener section of the Council plan for 2012-2016 of mitigating the impact of and adapting to climate change.
3. At the meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2012 members received an overview of the draft strategy and it was suggested that the Committee at a future meeting receive an update on the development of the strategy and delivery plan. An update on the strategy and delivery plan was provided at the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2013 where it was agreed that a further update would be provided when the strategy and delivery plan would be out to consultation in 2014. This would provide an opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny to provide a response to be fed into the consultation.
4. Arrangements were made for the Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader to attend the special meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 to deliver a presentation focusing on:
  - Current situation on the strategy;
  - Consultation proposals;
  - Engaging with Members;
  - Future public engagement;
  - Potential ERDF funding for delivering climate change objectives

The comments made by the members would then form the Overview and Scrutiny response and be fed into the consultation process.

**The Climate change strategy and delivery plan**

5. The Strategy sets out a clear vision and objectives to become established as a low carbon county. It acts as a bridge between the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Climate Change Delivery Plan. The aims of the Strategy are:
  - (i) to reduce the county's emissions by 40% by 2020 from 1990 levels, stating :

We will reduce the demand for energy, ensure homes and businesses are energy efficient and will promote alternative low carbon forms of energy generation.
  - (ii) to adapt to a changing climate stating:

We will build upon the County Council's Adaptation Action Plan and ensure that individuals and organisations are more prepared for the challenges of a more extreme environment.
6. The aims are assigned in more detail across seven themes:
  - Public sector performance;
  - Low carbon economy;
  - Built environment;
  - Natural environment;
  - Transport and infrastructure;
  - Community engagement;
  - Impacts beyond our boundaries.
7. The Climate Change Delivery Plan takes the high level strategic objectives and translates them into local projects and actions. It details projects that are happening on the ground and key actions that are important to making progress in the seven themes. These are drawn from organisations and individuals across the County and demonstrate action at all scales, from individual residents to large organisations. Durham County Council is involved in a number of projects in the Plan; through Housing, the Warm up North scheme will be targeting energy efficiency and fuel poverty in the domestic sector whilst the Sustainability and Climate Change team are working with Business Durham to target the SMEs in Durham. The Business Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP) will develop low carbon businesses by offering support and signposting services that keep utility costs down and consequently lower carbon emissions.
8. Many other organisations and groups are represented in the Plan, and it is hoped that as it evolves, a greater number of examples will come forward.
9. The Delivery Plan will continue to strive towards a decarbonising of the economy, reducing fuel poverty and encouraging community ownership of emissions and renewables. In doing so it will aim to place Durham as a low carbon county, doing what it can to reduce emissions and preparing for the likely impacts.
10. Durham County Council has set two targets for reducing carbon emissions.

- **By 2020, reduce carbon emissions (from domestic, commercial, and transport sources) across County Durham by 40% from a 1990 baseline.** This was adopted first and is above the UK target of 34%. It is worth pointing out that the UK Government also has an 80% reduction target by 2050 so additional goals and targets will need setting to move towards this overall objective.
- **By 2020, reduce carbon emissions (from domestic, commercial, and transport sources) across County Durham by 22% from a 2005 baseline.** This was adopted later as a condition of signing the Covenant of Mayors. This represents a greater reduction in emissions.

11. DECC have recently released performance data on 'carbon emissions within a Local Authority influence' and it shows Durham is progressing well towards its 2020 targets. The position in 2011 (the most recent year with data) shows we have achieved our 40% target and need to achieve just over another 4% saving before 2020 to achieve our stricter, Covenant of Mayors target. Comparing Durham with other areas, we are slightly ahead of the UK average reduction but behind the North East average.

12. Given the current position and the long lead-in to the UK Government's 2050 target it would be appropriate for DCC to choose an additional medium term target. Linking into the County Durham Plan timescale and choosing 2031 would be logical and a 55% reduction (from 1990 levels) is a suitable aspiration. This can obviously be reviewed by the Council as data becomes available but it will give a realistic aspiration to work to whilst the Plan is active.

## Overview and Scrutiny response

13. At the meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 there was broad support by members of the Committee for the Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan. The following comments were made by members in relation to the built environment and funding:

### Built Environment

- In relation to new builds such as Hitachi there is a need to ensure that developers build buildings with high energy standards to ensure that CO2 emissions are low and where possible zero carbon buildings. Ensure that businesses have the support needed to enable them to reduce emissions.
- In relation to business, there is a need to ensure that as there is an upturn in the economy carbon emissions do not increase. Encourage business to invest in energy efficiency measures, hold awareness raising events with business, ensure that building standards on energy efficiency and other climate change issues are properly enforced and encourage developers to build buildings with high energy standards.
- Concerning community buildings ensure that advice is available on the range of energy efficient and low carbon technologies as well as awareness raising campaigns with staff to reduce emissions.
- Need to ensure that new development (housing) within County Durham is as sustainable as possible.

- Need to continue to encourage and assist schools to lower their carbon emissions.

#### Seminars for members

- Members welcomed the opportunity to attend the seminars which had been arranged for members on the 'Warm Up North' scheme (12<sup>th</sup> February, 2014) and Climate Change and the Community (25<sup>th</sup> March, 2014).

#### Potential ERDF funding

- A huge opportunity for County Durham (ring fenced allocation of £16 million for low carbon projects) need to ensure that we have projects developed to meet expectations and access the available funding.
- Further updates on the progress of the seven activity areas identified focusing on project development and the flow of funding to be considered at future meetings of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

14. The above response has been signed off by the Chair and Vice-chair of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and shared with the members of the Committee to ensure accuracy prior to it being sent to the appropriate officers within the Regeneration and Economic Development Service Grouping as the Overview and Scrutiny response to the Climate Change Strategy and the Delivery Plan.

#### **Recommendation**

15. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to receive the report, note its content and endorse the submission as the formal response of the Overview and Scrutiny to the Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan.
16. As part of the refresh of the work programme for the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny an update is provided detailing feedback from the consultation and next steps.

#### **Background Papers**

Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC report and presentation – Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan – 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2014.  
Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan.

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**Appendix 1: Implications taken from Cabinet report**

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**Finance** - No immediate implications

**Staffing** - No immediate implications

**Risk** – Failure to address climate change will create increasing risks in the future.

**Equality and Diversity** – Climate change impacts tend to have a greater impact on less wealthy or vulnerable people. The strategy will help prevent or reduce these impacts. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out.

**Accommodation** – None

**Crime and Disorder** – None

**Human Rights** - None

**Consultation** - Consultation with groups has been carried out in early 2013. A consultation plan for public consultation on the strategy and delivery plan has been prepared for January 2014.

**Procurement** – None

**Disability Discrimination Act** – None

**Legal Implications** - None