

CLIMATE CHANGE TASK & FINISH GROUP - FINAL REPORT DECEMBER 2008

Responsible Officer Rachel Strivens

e-mail: Rachel.Strivens@shropshire-
cc.gov.uk

Tel: 01743
252599

Fax 01743 252505

Summary

This report brings forward for Cabinet approval the Final Report of the Climate Change Member Task and Finish Group.

Recommendations

- A. Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the Key Recommendations for Action of the Final Report of the Climate Change Member Task and Finish Group which is attached at Appendix A.

REPORT

Background

1. The Climate Change Member Task & Finish Group was set up as an outcome from the Climate Change Reports submitted to the Corporate Support Services and Economy and Environment Scrutiny Panels in summer 2007.
2. The key aims of the group was to assess the forecast impact of climate change on Shropshire, review what the County Council has been doing to address climate change, understand the new challenges to be faced in the light of local government reorganisation, impending government policy and legislation, and to make recommendations on any changes to policy or actions that may be needed. It was not the aim of the Group to set specific targets, such as a new year on year carbon emission reductions percentage, but to assess progress made so far, and make recommendations for the action required to put in place targets in other key policy documents.

3. The Final Report sets out:
 - Government Policy and Legislative Framework for Council Action;
 - Shropshire County Council's Corporate and Community Achievements;
 - Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation;
 - The Programme of Work – outcomes of the meetings;
 - Links to Best Practice in other local authorities and organisations;
 - Key Recommendations for Action - Mandatory, Existing Commitment and Aspirational/Best Practice.
4. Since the Task & Finish Group set up in 2007, the draft Climate Change Bill has now become the Climate Change Act 2008 and sets a target to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 80% lower than the 1990 baseline.
5. The government has stated its commitment to addressing climate change and local government has an important part to play. Shropshire Council must demonstrate community leadership in tackling the challenges of climate change by setting a strong example as an organisation through its corporate policies and actions.
6. At the Environment Scrutiny Panel on 15 January 2009 members requested that officers investigate the impact of changes to the Council's electricity supply contract. At the time of going to tender demand for green electricity from renewable sources exceeded supply and in order to continue to receive 100% green electricity the Council would have faced paying a premium of £146,000. Instead the Council opted for the offer of electricity supplied from good quality CHP (GQCHP) at a more manageable premium of £30,000. School sites in particular had been concerned with rising utility prices and with such a high premium comparison with brown electricity prices would have led to concerns. GQCHP is electricity that is generated much more efficiently than in conventional power stations and the waste heat, which is usually dumped via cooling towers, is usefully deployed. The use of green electricity reduced the Council's CO₂ emissions by approximately 7350 tonnes/year whereas the use of GQCHP reduces emissions by approximately 1530 tonnes/year.
7. Shropshire Council will need to put in place robust and auditable systems to ensure it's overall energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions are accurately recorded for NI185 and the Carbon Reduction Commitment, and for a programme of year on year improvements to help reduce CO₂ emissions and meet the 80% by 2050 government target.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Climate Change Bill Act 2008

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/ukpga_20080027_en_1

Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/20060019.htm>

Cutting through the green tape: the powers

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/874296>

Volatile times: Transport, climate change and the price of oil

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/1335142>

Human Rights Act Appraisal

There are no known human rights implications of these proposals.

Environmental Appraisal

Climate Change is recognised as one of the most important national and international issues. The Key Recommendations for Action should be followed up and acted upon.

Risk Management Appraisal

The Climate Change Act 2008, the Carbon Reduction Commitment, the Energy White Paper represent significant risk to Shropshire Council. There is a risk to reputation if we stop making improvements. Many other Local Authorities are now very active in tackling climate change issues. There is also a financial risk related to carbon trading. The more energy used, the more Shropshire Council will have to pay for carbon allowances. Additionally, the cost of electricity continues to rise. Cutting consumption makes money available for further improvements.

Additionally, the Council has signed up to National Indicators 185 and 194 (and reports quarterly on 186 and 188) which will mean mandatory targets on tackling CO₂, NO_x and PM₁₀ emissions from own operations, within the LA area. Not achieving these would be a high risk strategy.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

None specifically in preparation for this report.

Cabinet Member

John Overall

Local Member

All

Appendices

Appendix A – Climate Change Task & Finish Group Final Report December 2008