

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Wendy Bixby
Title	Implementing the Environmental Sustainability Strategy – Signing up to the LGA Climate Local Commitment		
Wards affected	All wards		

This report concerns Colchester Borough Council demonstrating its on-going commitment to achieving its carbon reduction targets and delivering work that contributes towards building more resilient communities by signing up to the LGA Climate Local Commitment

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To approve Colchester Borough Council (CBC) becoming a signatory of the Local Government Association (LGA) initiative 'Climate Local'.
- 1.2 To approve the Climate Local Action Plan at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 To agree to meet the reporting and monitoring requirements set out in paragraph 5.3.
- 1.4 To agree that the Leader of the Council will sign the LGA Climate Local Commitment.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 Environmental sustainability is a strategic priority for the Council and the Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ESS) 2015-2020 was adopted in January 2015. As part of the adopted strategy a key deliverable is for CBC to consider becoming a signatory of the LGA initiative 'Climate Local'.
- 2.2 Becoming a signatory to Climate Local will help the Council to take the next step on from the Nottingham Declaration, which it signed up to in 2008, and will demonstrate an on-going commitment to reducing the Council's own carbon emissions from its buildings, services and operations. It will also help to capture the outcomes in the work it does to support communities to become more resilient to the changing world around us.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 To not sign the Climate Local Commitment. There is no significant negative impact for the Council if it does not sign up to Climate Local, but by doing so it does present an ideal opportunity to highlight how well the Council is working to reduce its own carbon emissions; how we are working with communities to help them become more resilient to climate change; and the expectations the Council has for suppliers and partners to demonstrate good "green" practices and lead on their own carbon reduction projects.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Climate Local is helping Local Authorities across the UK to capture the opportunities and benefits of taking action on a changing climate, through saving on their energy bills; generating income from renewable energy; attracting new jobs and investment; reducing flood risks and managing the impacts of extreme weather.
- 4.2 As of April 2015, 102 Local Authorities had signed up to Climate Local.
- 4.3 The Council does not have a statutory responsibility to sign-up to Climate Local; however, in doing so it commits CBC to progressively address the risks and pursue the opportunities presented by a changing climate, in line with local priorities, through our role as:
- Community leader – helping local people and businesses to be smarter about their energy use and to prepare for climate impacts;
 - Service provider – delivering services that are resource-efficient, less carbon-intensive, resilient and that protect those who are most vulnerable to climate impacts;
 - Estate manager – ensuring that our own buildings and operations are resource-efficient, use clean energy, and are well prepared for the impacts of a changing climate.
- 4.4 Climate Local will run alongside the ESS and the new Local Authority Carbon Management (LACM) Plan. Together this provides the Council's key stakeholders, Councillors and employees with a clear statement of direction for its carbon reduction-related activities.
- 4.5 By becoming a signatory to Climate Local the Council pledges a commitment to the delivery of an action plan written by CBC. The Climate Local Action Plan (shown in Appendix 1) provides a high level overview on how the Council will deliver its commitment to Climate Local, by meeting the key objectives from the ESS.
- 4.6 When signing up to Climate Local we will take the opportunity to communicate what 'leading by example' means to our partners and suppliers, and how we can support and guide external organisations to make positive changes towards good environmental practices.
- 4.7 The benefits and opportunities for Local Authorities include:
- Inclusion in a forum made up of, and led by, Councils to promote activity on Climate Change which demonstrates leadership locally and nationally.
 - Support for Local Authorities to share good practice; identify other authorities undertaking similar initiatives; support joint working; and the sharing of experience and ideas.
 - Free access to practical tools and advice on climate change issues.
 - Collaborative efforts across the UK in raising the profile of carbon reduction and adaptation nationally.
 - Access to useful topic-specific briefing packs providing guidance and advice on how preparing for a changing climate can help achieve wider local priorities
- 4.8 More specifically the benefits for CBC will be:
- Support for the delivery of the Council's new ESS and a new LACM plan for 2015-2020.
 - Access to an online discussion forum for Climate Change and Sustainability Officers.

- Opportunity to engage with other Councils on key issues, view Climate Local action plans from around the country, share ideas and keep up to date with the latest developments.
- Access to information from other organisations including Climate Ready (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs); the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to provide access to research papers linked to Health, Social and Vulnerability; REFIT (a procurement framework to support Local Authorities).
- Support in developing a meaningful way of communicating to partners and suppliers what the expectations are from a leading carbon-cutting Council.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 Cabinet to approve Colchester Borough Council signing-up to the LGA 'Climate Local' Commitment which recognises that our council has an important role to play in helping our residents and businesses to capture the opportunities and benefits of taking action on climate change. These include saving money on energy bills, generating income from renewable energy, attracting new jobs and investment in 'green' industries, supporting new sources of energy, managing local flood-risk and water scarcity and protecting our natural environment.
- 5.2 Cabinet approve the high level 'Climate Local' action plan (in Appendix 1 which reflects the key actions within the Environmental Sustainability Strategy.
- 5.3 Cabinet agree that in signing the Climate Local commitment and producing the action plan at Appendix 1, CBC:
 - Has set locally-owned and determined commitments and actions to reduce carbon emissions and to manage climate impacts.
 - Will publish these commitments and actions, enabling local communities to hold CBC to account;
 - Confirms its willingness to share the learning from its experiences and achievements with other councils; and
 - Confirms that it will regularly refresh its commitments and actions to ensure they are current and continue to reflect local priorities.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 Signing up to Climate Local will capture outcomes that will help achieve the aims and objectives from the new Strategic Plan 2015-18 by meeting objectives to be vibrant, prosperous, thriving and welcoming.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 Signing up to Climate Local is an agreed key deliverable from the ESS. Consultation took place for the ESS in September- October 2014 through an online questionnaire.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 A communications plan is in place to publicise the ESS and inform residents, partners, businesses, the third sector and CBC staff about successful delivery of actions. Climate Local is an action in the ESS and is included in this communications plan. Opportunities will be sought to publicise CBC signing up to Climate Local.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 There is no financial cost to signing up to Climate Local.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 [An Equality Impact Assessment](#) has been completed for the ESS for which Climate Local is a key deliverable, and published on our website. It is anticipated that there will be a positive benefit to Colchester residents, businesses and partners.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 It is anticipated that there will be no negative impact on Community Safety.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 The capture of outcomes from Climate Local progress reporting will demonstrate:
- Improved well-being of Council staff and Colchester residents.
 - Provision of more efficient services helps build more resilient communities.
 - Provision of more energy efficient housing will reduce fuel poverty in Colchester.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 Risks and opportunities have been assessed for Climate Local. The opportunities are outlined in the paragraphs above. One potential risk is to the Council's reputation if it does not deliver on the actions contained in Appendix 1. This risk has been mitigated by taking key deliverables from the ESS and will be mitigated on an ongoing basis through monitoring of delivery against the Action Plan.

14. Background Papers

- Supporting information on Climate Local

Appendix

1. Climate Local Action Plan (Appendix 1)

Appendix 1

Colchester Borough Council signs the Climate Local Commitment to demonstrate a continued commitment to a greener Colchester, with the aim that residents, businesses, staff, third sector, partners and suppliers will match the Council's commitment, resulting in a much wider positive impact.

This Climate Local Action Plan provides a high-level overview of the work that CBC intends to do to cut carbon; as well as influence, where it can, partners, suppliers and external organisations to follow our lead by using embedded processes such as green procurement.

Colchester Borough Council wants to make the statement 'Leading by example' meaningful, so will extend its work as a Leading Carbon-Cutting Council in the UK to influence its partners and suppliers to take an environmentally sustainable approach to their own services, operations and buildings. While the Council cannot capture the carbon being saved from those projects outside its control, it will result in a more collaborative approach to improving the whole environment across the borough.

The Council is already working with communities to help them build resilience to the changing world around us. These projects are community and third sector-led so not within our control; but by making advice and support more accessible we are able to influence and support communities to make well advised, environmentally sustainable choices.

Action Plan to accompany the Climate Local Commitment

Priority 1 – 'Community Leadership' by reducing our environmental impact of Council's Buildings, Services and Operations, CBC will:							
Key Deliverable 1.0	Key Deliverable 1.1	Key Deliverable 1.2	Key Deliverable 1.3	Key Deliverable 1.4	Key Deliverable 1.5	Key Deliverable 1.6	Key Deliverable 1.7
Meet targets in CO2 reduction by 2020.	Show community leadership by making further commitments to reduce carbon emissions.	Embed green procurement.	Look at opportunities to reduce energy.	Assess opportunities for rain water harvesting and/or grey water collection systems for council buildings and operations.	Support our staff to make greener choices.	Improve our housing stock.	Improve recycling performance.

Please turn over for Priority 2

Priority 2 – ‘Building resilient communities’ by working with Colchester’s Residents, Businesses and the Third Sector CBC will:									
Key Deliverable 2.1	Key Deliverable 2.2	Key Deliverable 2.3	Key Deliverable 2.4	Key Deliverable 2.5	Key Deliverable 2.7	Key Deliverable 2.8	Key Deliverable 3.0	Key Deliverable 3.1	Key Deliverable 3.2
Support local communities to help them become resilient to climate change.	Alignment of Colchester Borough Council strategies to enable a collaborative approach with external partners to achieve environmental sustainability.	Develop, create and promote opportunities for developing environmental understanding which will help retain rural skills and grow the local green economy.	Identify sources of grant and match funding to support sustainability projects.	Look at opportunities to reduce costs and save energy use in our communities.	Identify opportunities to deliver sustainable transport.	Support initiatives that deliver warmer, greener homes.	Provide a readily accessible online section on environmental sustainability for Colchester residents.	Work to reduce fuel poverty in Colchester.	Engage with partner agencies that could support us in the delivery of sustainability projects.

The action plan will include a statement as follows:

“Colchester Borough Council has signed the Climate Local agreement for the benefit of capturing the Council’s own achievements and to use as a vehicle to communicate the opportunities for residents, communities, partners, suppliers, businesses and third sector organisations to be involved in making Colchester an environmentally sustainable town.”