

Bolton Council

Report to: Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee

Date: 16th October 2012

Report of: Director of Development and Regeneration

Report No: ESSC/12/12

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Report Title: **Progress on environmental sustainability**

Non Confidential: (***Non-Confidential***) This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Purpose: To report on the progress that the council is making in improving environmental sustainability

Recommendations: Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the content of the report

Background Doc(s):

Summary: The report explains what strategies the council has in place to promote environmental sustainability. It goes on to summarise the actions it is taking to implement the strategies.

1. Background

- 1.1 Bolton's approach on environmental sustainability is set out in two key policy documents; Bolton – Our Vision 2012-2015 and the Cleaner, Greener and Sustainable Strategy 2012-15. These two strategies replace the former Environment Strategy 2006-2011. The council also has a Carbon Management Plan, but the actions contained in this have largely been implemented. Future action to reduce carbon emissions will be in the context of the two strategies that look forward from 2012.
- 1.2 Bolton – Our Vision 2012-2015 sets out a priority of reducing the environmental impact on the Borough. It has a target of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 1700 tonnes by 2015 through reducing emissions from buildings, street lighting and council operations. The Delivery Plan also sets a target of increasing the number of Green Liaison Officers within the council and partners from 50 to 100 by 2015.
- 1.3 The Cleaner and Greener Partnership and the council approved the Cleaner, Greener and Sustainable Strategy 2012 -2015 in 2011. It defines six sustainability impact priorities for 2012-15:
- Continuing to work with Greater Manchester authorities on a range of sustainability issues
 - Working to reduce the council's carbon emissions by implementing a range of green solutions
 - Continuing to encourage high standards in sustainable design and construction
 - Supporting Fair Trade and emerging Transition Towns
 - Fully integrating risk management and climate change adaptation processes within the council's business planning cycle
 - Rolling out the Green Liaison Officers scheme to the wider partnership
- 1.4 The Strategy's environmental sustainability targets are the same as for Bolton – Our Vision 2012-15.
- 1.5 Bolton's approach to environmental sustainability must also be set in a wider context. AGMA launched its pioneering Climate Change Strategy in July 2011, setting out how it will build a greener, more sustainable region. The Strategy sets out Greater Manchester's plan to build a low carbon economy by 2020, reducing carbon emissions by 48% and reacting to the changing climate while creating future jobs and new industries in the 'green' sector. The document co-ordinates the carbon reduction plans already crafted by the ten Greater Manchester local authorities and provides an effective, integrated approach to tackling climate change. The plan outlines four headline visions for Greater Manchester by 2020:
- A rapid transition to a low carbon economy
 - Collective carbon emissions reduced by 48%
 - Be prepared for and actively adapting to a rapidly changing climate
 - 'Carbon literacy' will have become embedded into the culture of organisations, lifestyles and behaviours

- 1.6 The last two years have seen considerable changes in the way that the council reports its environmental performance. Previously the council's environmental performance was reported to the Government via a set of national indicators subsequently scrapped by the coalition government.
- 1.7 The introduction of the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC) in 2010 has placed a reporting and financial requirement on the council to report and pay for the CO₂ it produces. Under this legislation the council is required to recalculate its CO₂ emissions baseline, and submit a footprint report. The council's total footprint emissions when last measured, were 38,149 tonnes of CO₂. The CRC requires the council to pay £12 for every tonne of CO₂ and the amount the council had to pay for 2011-2012 was £325,872. This financial cost is a significant driver to take action on reducing the council's CO₂ emissions.
- 1.8 In November 2006 the council signed the Nottingham Declaration committing itself to raise awareness and take action on climate change. The Local Government Association has now introduced Climate Local which is a way for councils to renew their commitment to awareness and action. This is an approach agreed with the Department for Energy and Climate Change and is also supported by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. It consists of a four stage process:
1. Sign up to the Climate Local commitment
 2. Declare commitments and actions
 3. Sharing learning and experiences
 4. Sharing progress
- 1.9 As an overarching body, AGMA has already agreed to sign up to the commitment and it is up to individual councils to decide their own commitments.

2 Summary of Actions the council is taking

- 2.1 This section summarises the principal actions the council is already taking using the structure of Climate Local and these are set out in more detail in the Appendix.

2.2 Mainstreaming climate change into council work

- The council has approved the strategies outlined in Section 1 of this report.
- It has set up a network of Green Liaison Officers across the council who promote good environmental practice in their workplaces.
- The Carbon Board of council directors oversees decisions on issues relating to measures on reducing the council's carbon emissions.
- The council has signed the Nottingham Declaration.

2.2 Energy

- Bolton council offer support to residents to make their home more efficient including grants for new boilers; insulation schemes targeting the most deprived areas; and a green loan scheme in conjunction with Hoot Credit Union.

- The council has implemented its Carbon Management Plan for 2008-13 and has set targets for future reductions in carbon emissions. Carbon saving projects implemented include:
 - Installing powerperfectors in Bolton Town Hall and Bolton Market which optimise voltage making electrical equipment use less energy. This saves the council £65,850 a year;
 - The 'Nightwatchman' programme automatically turns off any computers left on after 7pm saving the council around £20,000 and 200 tonnes of CO₂ a year; and
 - The streetlighting energy efficiency programme. The council is currently in phase 1 of a 4 phase, 7 year programme. By the end of year 7 the council will reach an annual saving in excess of £300,000 per annum.
- Current and future projects include:
 - The accommodation review;
 - Water chiller installations;
 - High speed, low energy hand drier installations;
 - Additional sensor controlled lighting programme; and
 - Reviewing building operating hours to align with the Nightwatchman programme.

2.3 Local economic growth

The council:

- is working with other GM authorities on the Green Deal;
- has worked with Groundwork to provide business support on environmental issues; and
- has introduced a Bolton Market loyalty card.

2.4 Natural environment

The council:

- has extended the network of Local Nature Reserves across the Borough;
- has introduced traditional meadow management techniques to increase habitat and provide habitat buffers against climate change pressures;
- has undertaken partnership work with Lancashire Wildlife Trust to re-wet mossland sequestering carbon, reducing surface water flows and therefore flooding & improving habitat quality; and
- has prepared strategic flood risk assessments for the Borough and formulated its planning policies accordingly.

2.5 Planning and the built environment

The council:

- has adopted the Core Strategy, which includes policies on flood risk, green infrastructure, biodiversity, renewable energy and sustainable development; and
- and its partners have constructed sustainable buildings, including Bolton One, which has been awarded a BREEAM excellent certificate.

2.6 Transport

The council:

- has adopted the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan 3, one of whose objectives is to ensure that carbon emissions from transport are reduced in line with Government targets to minimise the impact of climate change;
- has adopted the Core Strategy, which concentrates development in locations that minimise the need to use private motorised transport, and gives priority to cyclists and pedestrians;
- has made operational improvements, such as waste modernisation and joint waste management, which have led to reduced mileage and fuel usage; and
- has introduced measures to encourage the use of green transport by its own staff, for example cycle allowances.

2.7 Waste

The council:

- has introduced food waste recycling on its refuse collection rounds;
- has implemented a door stepping campaign to 25,000 households in Bolton to improve recycling participation in low performing areas;
- has signed up to a Defra campaign to help increase recycling across the Borough; and it continues to recycle paper, plastic and glass from its own buildings

2.8 Health and communities

The council:

- works closely with the Energy Saving Trust as well as Bolton NHS to promote “Keep Warm, Keep Well” through educational materials, such as thermometers, leaflets;
- is working with the NHS to identify and minimise climate change risks in relation to public health and vulnerable communities; and
- is promoting active lifestyles that have low energy use

3 Next steps

3.1 The council will continue to take a wide range of actions that will help to promote environmental sustainability. In particular it will concentrate on achieving the targets set out in Bolton: Our Vision 2012-2015 and will also take steps to sign up to the Climate Local declaration.

3.2 The council would sign to demonstrate its commitment to addressing climate change and to challenge itself to build on its existing achievements. By signing the council will commit itself to:

- Set out what actions it intends to undertake locally to reduce carbon emissions and respond to changes in the climate within its own operations and services and with the local community;
- Set out the level of ambition and how it will monitor and demonstrate achievements; and

- Share actions and ambitions, progress and learning from experiences and achievements with other councils and national partners.

4 **Recommendation**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee note this report.