

Report of: Environmental Health Business Manager
To: Executive Board
Date: 19th March 2007 **Item No:**
Title of Report : Council Motion – Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: The report seeks to respond to council motion in the most practical way

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Armitage

Scrutiny Responsibility: Environment

Area(s) affected: All

Report Approved by

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Armitage

Legal: Jeremy Thomas

Finance: Andy Collet

Strategic Director: Michael Lawrence

Policy Framework: Oxford Plan

Recommendation(s): A focussed energy management plan will be developed by the new Energy Manager and the Climate Change Action Team to ensure the 3% year-on-year greenhouse gas reduction target is met.

Council motion

1. On 20 November 2006, council adopted the following motion:

“Council welcomes the publication of the Stern Report and the growing public awareness about the impact of climate change. We believe it is time for Oxford City Council to redouble its efforts to tackle global warming.

We welcome the steps many Oxford residents, employers and institutions are already taking to reduce energy use and global warming emissions.

The impact of climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing today’s World. Left unchecked, climate change will lead to both human and environmental degradation. These impacts will hit the poor and future generations the hardest. We need all levels of Government and every community to work together to cut carbon emissions in line with and beyond the targets set by Labour in Government.

We welcome the steps already taken by Oxford City Council to reduce CO2 and other global warming emissions.

Following the Friends of the Earth's 'Big Ask' campaign, which calls for legislation to require 3% year-on-year reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, Council calls on the Executive to pledge to match this level in emission reductions across all services the Authority provides. Council further calls upon the Executive to report back on the actions necessary to achieve these reductions by no later than the last Council meeting of this financial year. Following this report Council will report annually on how it is responding to meet the 'Big Ask' environmental challenge and recommendations of the Stern Review. This 3% requirement will be added to the climate change section of the Oxford Plan.

We further call on the Oxford Strategic Partnership and the Executive to work with residents, employers and institutions in Oxford City to reduce global warming emissions year on year.

We further call on the Executive to work with neighbouring Oxfordshire local authorities to reduce global warming emissions.

We call on the Government to include a Climate Change Bill in the next session of Parliament and for this Bill to include an annual reporting of reductions in CO2 and other global warming emissions in the UK as well as a statutory requirement to reduce these emissions by 3% year on year. We will write directly to

Her Majesty's Government to this effect and ask our Oxford MPs to do the same.

We call on every Oxford citizen, employer and institution to play their part in combating climate change, both as a contribution to tackling global warming and as an example to other Cities."

Action on climate change to date

2. Oxford City Council has been working to improve the energy efficiency of homes in the city since the late 1980s.
3. Oxford City Council has had a Climate Change Action Team in place since early 2006 that is supported at the very highest levels both politically and through the executive board. The Chairman of the Climate Change Action Team is one of the strategic directors (Michael Lawrence).
4. Executive Board approved a series of recommendations from the Oxford Climate Change Action Plan (OCCAP) to be implemented by the CCAT These key five actions are to:
 - i) Reduce Council CO₂ emissions by 25% by 2010 (on 2005 baseline);
 - ii) Raise awareness and understanding of climate change in Oxford;
 - iii) Improve energy efficiency standards of new developments;
 - iv) Increase the uptake of low carbon systems among businesses and residents; and
 - v) Help transform Oxford into a sustainable city

A full-time climate change officer was appointed at the end of October 2006 to help implement and drive forward the climate change action plan.

5. As a consequence of the creation of the Climate Change Action Team, the council has implemented a range of forward thinking approaches to tackling climate change going beyond what many local authorities have done to date. The latest Climate change Implementation Plan outlines OCC activities under each of the five key actions (see attached). Activities of particular note are detailed below.
6. In it's response to the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA), Oxford City Council has helped improve domestic energy efficiency by 25% (from 1995 reference point) in existing Oxford City housing and is well on track to meet its government HECA housing energy efficiency improvement target of 30% by 2010.
7. The council has recently rolled out a government-funded £248k programme of free insulation for the over-60s in Oxford – with the aim of improving sub-standard housing, in particular thermal comfort, reducing energy bills and improving energy efficiency of homes in Oxford. OCC has funded fuel poverty grants (£50k this year, £85k next year and £100k the year after) which are available for energy efficiency improvements for households just above the benefits level struggling

with energy bills. (Signposting to national grants takes place for private sector households on income related benefits.)

06/07 energy grants funds have been virtually all allocated and are on target to be spent by the end of this financial year.

8. OCC have implemented a smart-metering system on four of our high energy use buildings using the latest technologies to date in this area enabling us more tightly to manage gas, electricity and water consumption – the intention is to roll this technology out across all council buildings, resource permitting.
9. OCC have established ground breaking planning procedures such as the Natural Resource Impact Analysis - Supplementary Planning Document that sets a requirement of 20% onsite renewable/low carbon generation for any new developments of 10 residential units and above or developments of 2000m² and above. We are one of the first Local Authorities to set such a demanding standard. Since adoption in November 2006, this is already leading to exacting improvements in the environmental performance of developments in Oxford.
10. We are also exploring the opportunities that Energy Services Companies may present in Oxford that will provide further value-added service to local residents and businesses.
11. Very recent achievements that will advance the work area:
 - i) OCC have now been accepted on the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management Programme which will complement and consolidate the work we have done to date in this area and lead to further improvements within Oxford City Council.
 - ii) OCC, in the 07/08 budget approved by Council, made provision for a number of climate change related initiatives and aim to make use of Prudential Borrowing and Carbon Trust LA financing mechanisms to make more efficient and effective use of funds. One initiative involves the employment of a dedicated Energy Manager to direct implementation of a series of advanced energy efficiency measures throughout Council buildings.

Response to specific requests of EB in the motion

12. *Adopt 3% year on year greenhouse gas emissions reduction across all services the Authority provides:*

This target has now been taken up in the CCIP (see attached). In the short term it is a less onerous target than the existing target of 15% by 2010, but has a longer timeframe. The 3% is to be regarded as a minimum annual reduction in emissions.

13. *Report back on the actions necessary to achieve the 3% year on year greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and annual reporting on progress:*

This report is intended to fulfil the reporting requirement for this year on actions required to meet the 3% target. The activities described above and listed under Action 1 of the CCIP need to be delivered against.

Most crucially, the employment of a qualified and experienced Energy Manager, is necessary to meet the 3% year-on-year target. The 07/08 budget has made provision for this approach.

An implementation plan of focussed energy management works will be developed, and driven by the Energy Manager. With an operational budget and full corporate sign-up, the 3% target should be met year-on-year.

14. *Oxford Strategic Partnership and the Executive to work with residents, employers and institutions in Oxford City to reduce global warming emissions year-on-year.*

A Town Hall conference and exhibition is being planned for World Environment Day on 5 June – working title: *Oxford Is My World: What you can do today*– aimed at anyone living and working in Oxford.

15. *Executive to work with neighbouring Oxfordshire local authorities to reduce global warming emissions:*

This is happening via the Oxford Strategic Plan, Oxford Inspires Sustainable Institutions Group, and direct officer contact - working together on specific projects (eg. Sandhills school wind generator planning issues) and sharing experiences (eg. over following the LA Carbon Management Programme).

Conclusions

16. Much good work has been done and is planned on tackling climate change locally.

17. A focussed energy management programme, developed and driven by the new qualified and experienced Energy Manager and the Climate Change Action Team, with an operational budget, will be necessary to ensure the 3% year-on-year greenhouse gas reduction target is met. The 07/08 budget has made provision for this approach.

Appendices:

1. Latest version of the Climate change Action Team's Climate Change Implementation Plan

2. Letter (attached) calling on the Government to include a Climate Change Bill in the next session of Parliament and for this Bill to include an annual reporting of reductions in CO2 and other global warming emissions in the UK as well as a statutory requirement to reduce these emissions by 3% year on year. (Similar letters sent asking our Oxford MPs to do the same.)
3. Reply from Minister (attached)
4. Replies from Oxford MPs (attached)

Name and contact details of author: John Copley Environmental Health
Business Manager, jcopley@oxford.gov.uk

Background papers: None



Ian Pearson, MP
Minister of State (Climate Change
and the Environment)
Department of the Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
LONDON
SW1 3JR

December 2006
Our ref:

Dear Mr. Pearson

Climate Change

I write to bring to your attention the following Motion adopted by the City Council at a meeting of full Council on 20th November 2006:-

“Council welcomes the publication of the Stern Report and the growing public awareness about the impact of climate change. We believe it is time for Oxford City Council to redouble its efforts to tackle global warming.

We welcome the steps many Oxford residents, employers and institutions are already taking to reduce energy use and global warming emissions.

The impact of climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing today's World. Left unchecked, climate change will lead to both human and environmental degradation. These impacts will hit the poor and future generations the hardest. We need all levels of Government and every community to work together to cut carbon emissions in line with and beyond the targets set by Labour in Government.

We welcome the steps already taken by Oxford City Council to reduce CO₂ and other global warming emissions.

Following the Friends of the Earth's 'Big Ask' campaign, which calls for legislation to require 3% year-on-year reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, Council calls on the Executive to pledge to match this level in emission reductions across all services the Authority provides. Council further calls upon the Executive to report back on the actions necessary to achieve these reductions by no later than the last Council meeting of this financial year. Following this report Council will report annually on how it is responding to meet the 'Big Ask' environmental challenge and recommendations of the Stern Review.

We further call on the Oxford Strategic Partnership and the Executive to work with residents, employers and institutions in Oxford City to reduce global warming emissions year-on-year.

We call on the Executive to work with neighbouring Oxfordshire local authorities to reduce global warming emissions.

We call on the Government to include a Climate Change Bill in the next session of Parliament and for this Bill to include an annual reporting of reductions in CO2 and other global warming emissions in the UK. We will write directly to Her Majesty's Government to this effect and ask our Oxford MPs to do the same.

We call on every Oxford citizen, employer and institution to play their part in combating climate change, both as a contribution to tackling global warming and as an example to other Cities."

Can I draw your attention to the penultimate paragraph of the Motion. Of course, the Queen's Speech did include a Climate Change Bill. Can I though point out the Council's request that the Bill should include "an annual reporting of reductions in CO2 and other global warming emissions in the UK".

The Council's Executive will consider the Motion, and decide how to take it forward, in due course. I am also considering how to bring to general attention the final paragraph of the Motion.

I have sent a letter in similar terms to Oxford's two MPs, Andrew Smith MP and Dr. Evan Harris MP.

Yours sincerely

Caroline J. Bull
Chief Executive

