

**Report of:** Head of Environmental Development

**To:** City Executive Board

**Date:** 7 January 2009

**Item No**

**Title of Report:** Climate Change Adaptation Plan

### Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** To update members, following an EB recommendation in June 08, on the council's need to develop a Climate Change Adaptation Plan to meet corporate priorities and reach targets against newly introduced national indicators pledged in LAA2.

**Key decision:** Yes

**Board member:** Cllr Tanner

**Report Approved by**

Jeremy Thomas for Legal & Democratic Services

Chris Kaye for Finance

Mel Barrett, Director, City Regeneration

Cllr Tanner, Board Member, Cleaner Greener

**Policy Framework:** LAA2 targets on adaptation (NI 188 Planning to adapt to climate change). Local performance indicator (LI 006 – no. of OCC departments with Climate Change Adaptation Plans in place. Nottingham Declaration – City is a signatory. Corporate Plan: *“By 2011 we will....be better prepared for future impacts of climate change..... by implementing a climate change adaptation plan”*.

**Recommendations:**

The Board is recommended to instruct officers to:

1. aim to achieve level 0 of NI188 by August 2009
2. take forward governance issues via the Carbon Management Board.

## **Background**

1. In June, Environmental Development (ED) presented an overview of the need for the Council to develop a Climate Change Adaptation Plan to complement the existing strong programme of work focused on mitigation actions and satisfy legislative requirements arising from the recently adopted Climate Change Bill. This will entail reaching the levels outlined in the LAA2 adaptation target (NI188: Planning to adapt to climate change), described below in paragraph 7.
  - Adaptation responses are required to address the impacts of both 'weather' and 'climate'. Climate is the average weather for a locality over a 30 year period which in periods of stable climate provides a reliable average including the inevitable peaks and troughs through natural variability. 'Weather' describes what is happening at any point in time, such as torrential downpours of rain, very high temperatures, and thunderstorms. An often quoted phrase that helps sum this up is "Climate is what you expect, weather is what you get!"
2. Adaptation describes the actions that need to be taken to reduce the negative consequences and enhance the beneficial consequences of weather and climate events.

## **Performance Framework**

3. The rationale behind the NI188 indicator is to ensure that local authorities are prepared to manage risks to service delivery, the public, local communities, local infrastructure, businesses and the natural environment from a changing climate, and to make the most of new opportunities that may arise as a consequence.
4. The indicator measures progress on assessing and managing climate risks and opportunities, and incorporating appropriate action into local authority and partners' strategic planning. The impacts might include increases in flooding, temperature, drought, and extreme weather events. These could create risks and opportunities such as impacts on local ecosystems and biodiversity, scope to grow new trees and plants, changing patterns of disease, impacts on planning and the local economy and public health.
5. All adaptation actions should take place in the context of sustainable development, in that there is little value in achieving adaptation strategies which, whilst providing resilience to changes in weather and climate, make future climate conditions worse through the emission of more greenhouse gases (Maladaptation). Common examples of maladaptation include introducing conventional air conditioning units into buildings in order to manage extreme high temperatures and

create comfortable internal conditions. Therefore, the link between our mitigation strategies (such as our internal facing programme - Getting our House in Order) and Adaptation strategies should be mutually inclusive at all times.

6. The NI 188 indicator attempts to gauge the level of preparedness for climate change that a Local Authority has reached against 5 levels of performance graded from 0 to 4.
7. A higher number represents further progress made in planning to adapt to climate change. The five levels are as follows:
  - Level 0: Getting Started, Project Planning/scoping and baseline understanding
  - Level 1: Public commitment and impacts assessment
  - Level 2: Comprehensive risk assessment
  - Level 3: Comprehensive Action plan
  - Level 4: Implementation, monitoring and continuous review
8. Through LAA2, the City Council, along with County and all the other Oxfordshire district councils, has set targets of reaching Level 3 of the NI188 indicator by the end of 2010/11 (with an interim target of reaching Level 1 by the end of the financial year 2008/9). This work is currently subject to resourcing considerations in relation to 09/10 year onwards.

### **Oxford City Council adaptation activity**

9. Oxford City Council has conducted some specific work on adaptation either specifically under an adaptation agenda or is currently fully engaged in areas that would come under the adaptation heading (e.g. Flooding responses –see below).
10. Adaptation activities to date at Oxford City Council:
  - signed the Nottingham Declaration Aug 06 – that pledges that the Council will address mitigation and adaptation
  - UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) Business Areas Climate Impacts Assessment Tool (BACLIAT) Workshops (Summer 2007) – a series of workshops were conducted across several OCC services areas during the Summer of 2007 to assess current preparedness for specific climate and weather events such as flooding, and heat wave.
  - OCC engagement on adaptation via Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP) - input into Oxford Community Strategy (Climate change briefing – with specific actions on Adaption)
  - Adaptation highlighted as a priority area in the Corporate Plan
  - Flooding impact survey work (ED - Summer 2007)

- Participation in workshops to inform the guidance documents on NI188 (GOSE Workshop – 22 October 2008, Guildford and ad hoc work with UKCIP over the past 2 years)

- Flooding groups – working with local groups

### **Achieving Level 1 of NI188 and above**

11. Some of the above areas of activity might mean that we are some way to reaching Level 1 or come under higher levels of the performance indicator, however, in terms of a fully coordinated cross-Council approach on adaptation, the council is currently somewhere between Level 0 to 1.
12. **Level 0 definition:** the local authority has begun the process of assessing the potential threats and opportunities across its estate and services and has identified and agreed the next steps to build on that assessment in a systematic and coordinated way.
13. **To achieve Level 0 fully covers areas such as:**
  - **Project planning** – setting timetables for reaching key targets at each level of the performance indicator and detailing how to integrate with mainstream council business and programmes.
  - **Engage with OSP partners** – need to develop an understanding of OSP partners' present position and work on collective actions (covered in part to date via our OSP work – see above)
  - **Establish Adaptation project team and have resources in place to deliver** (e.g. much in the same way as the carbon management team has been established) – this needs to include a lead officer, leads from the various directorates, and service units.
  - **Establish current baseline** – this includes knowledge of what there is of relevance related to adaptation in current council policies and procedures, strategies and plans and identification of existing resources available (e.g community risk register, flood plan, etc)
  - **Start to express a vision for a well adapting local community** – link to corporate plan and Community strategies (covered in part to date due to fact that in the corporate plan and referred to in OSP strategy)
14. **Level 1 definition:** the local authority has made a public commitment to identify and manage climate related risk. It has undertaken a local risk-based assessment of significant vulnerabilities and opportunities to weather and climate, both now and in the future. It can demonstrate a sound understanding of those not yet addressed in existing strategies and actions (e.g in land use planning documents, service delivery plans, flood resilience plans, emergency planning. Community risk

registers etc). It has communicated these potential vulnerabilities and opportunities to department/service heads and other local partners and has set out the next steps in addressing them.

**15. To achieve Level 1 fully covers areas such as:**

- **Community leadership:** establish leadership role on the issues within the authority and amongst the local community and members of the Oxford Strategic Partnership.(eg. sign the Nottingham declaration and publicise this)

- **Understanding of current vulnerability:** e.g. carry out a Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP) to determine local weather impacts and consequences, vulnerable council services and adaptations necessary within these services. Use this to raise awareness with elected members, senior personnel, OSP members and community groups. Procedures in place for monitoring ongoing impacts and the council's response to them.

- **Identifying significant potential impacts from future weather and climate:** Use appropriate method to identify key impacts (e.g Business Areas Climate Impacts Assessment Tool (BACLIAT) workshops – see above) ; focus on key service units initially; interpret UKCIP information to establish likely future impacts on our region (UKCIP 08 scenarios)

- **Sharing the load:** All service heads need to take ownership on adaptation in vulnerable service areas and participate fully in development of the adaptation action plan. Climate Change Adaptation needs to be built in to project management of work and ensure key officers in each team are involved. Assess if there are joint working opportunities with other organisations faced with similar issues (e.g Flooding resilience group already in place – several organisations involved)

- **Monitoring future impacts:** Systematic monitoring of the consequences of weather events (particularly extreme events – e.g Flooding impact survey work carried out by ED in Summer 07). Ensure not just a weather monitoring function – the explicit purpose is to know what were the serious consequences for the council (e.g. reduced service provision, increased income, financial loss, loss of reputation etc)

- **Weather and climate database:** at some point in the development of an adaptation plan there will need to be some interpretation of the scientific, meteorological data as it relates to our local community. The data available from UKCIP08 (currently delayed until possibly May 09) offers the prospect of better dealing with uncertainty and dealing with weather. A local authority could considerably improve its understanding of future impacts by having access to this data, which is presented in a user-friendly way.

## **Next steps: developing Climate Change Adaptation Plan**

16. Implementation of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan at OCC will set out a corporate response and pathways to be pursued by each department.

It will:

- outline how Oxford City Council could commit to developing adaptive capacity and delivering adaptation actions across the City Council in the Corporate Plan.
- formulate corporate adaptation principles that will apply to all departments (e.g. in response to flooding) re-emphasising the importance of partnership working and risk assessments.
- incorporate climate change adaptation into risk management and business continuity functions – in an integrated way.
- support departments on an ongoing basis, so that ongoing risk assessment and appraisal of adaptation options occurs.

This will be a substantial piece of work – probably about the same scale as the Getting Our House in Order, carbon management plan.

A report detailing a fully scoped action plan will be brought to the August 2009 City Executive Board. It will respond to the imminent legislation (Climate Change Bill) and guidance from Defra and deal with resource issues.

## **Climate Change Bill**

17. In the UK, the Climate Change Bill (expected to receive Royal Assent in autumn 2008), requires the government to prepare a programme of adaptation measures and creates new powers to direct public bodies to report on how they have assessed the risks of climate change to their work, and what they are doing to address these risks
18. The Bill will require Government to publish a strategy outlining how this new power will be used, identifying the priority organisations that will be covered by it, and provide statutory guidance on how to undertake a climate risk assessment and draw up an adaptation action plan.
19. It is vitally important that Oxford's Climate Change Adaptation Plan should take account of this new legislation and comply with guidance which will flow from it, expected to come through from Defra in the new year. Timeframes for this work should allow full engagement with the expected guidance.

## **Financial Implications**

20. The devising of a fully coordinated Oxford City Council Climate Change Adaptation Plan will require some re-prioritising of appropriate staffing

resources across the Council to deliver on the scale that we are doing with the Mitigation plan (Getting our House in Order).

21. There will be higher financial costs if the Council has to react to impacts of a changing climate in an ad hoc rather than a planned way.

### **Legal Implications**

22. Failure to plan to adapt to a changing climate could mean the Council will not be able to meet its statutory duties.

### **Risk Analysis**

23. The Council risks not being unable to maintain levels of service and deliver against priorities if it doesn't plan how it will adapt to a changing climate.

### **Climate Change Implications**

24. See 1-23. above

### **Recommendations**

25. The Board is recommended to instruct officers to:
  - o aim to achieve level 0 of NI188 by August 2009
  - o take forward governance issues via the Carbon Management Board.

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**Background papers:** None