

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

5TH SEPTEMBER 2007

ENERGY SAVING REPORT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Jill Dyer M.B.E.
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1. SUMMARY

1.1 Bromsgrove District Council was in receipt of support from DEFRA to carry out an assessment of what the Council could be doing to tackle climate change. The assessment was undertaken by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and it involved looking at various aspects of the Council's activities and making recommendations for actions.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To receive recommendations from the report prepared by the Energy Saving Trust

2.2 To instruct officers to establish a project group involving the portfolio holder for Planning and Environment which to pursue the recommendations contained in the report and to produce an update on progress for November 2007.

2.3 To approve the portfolio holder for Planning and Environment to be the lead member for climate change.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Bromsgrove District Council was in receipt of support from DEFRA to carry out an assessment of what the Council could be doing to tackle climate change. The assessment was undertaken by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and it involved looking at various aspects of the Council's activities and making recommendations for actions.

3.2 Members may well be aware that the United Nations Intergovernmental Group looking at Climate Change has concluded that greenhouse emissions could be reduced by 26 billion tonnes by 2030 and this would be more than enough to limit the expected temperature rise of between 2 – 3 degrees centigrade. It is recognised that such a move would cost the world economy billions of pounds over the next two decades, but this could be recouped by savings due to the health benefits and air pollution.

3.3 It is generally accepted that climate change is one of the major challenges for the planet and protection of the environment and issues of sustainability are forming a major consideration for organisations – public and private.

3.4 In order to begin to gain an understanding of the situation with regard to Bromsgrove a government estimate produced in 2004 stated that domestic energy use in Bromsgrove resulted in more than 272,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide being emitted each year, or 3.1 tonnes for every person. This compares to a UK average of 2.6 tonnes, putting Bromsgrove almost 20 per cent above the UK average. This is despite the fact that Bromsgrove had reported Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) progress of 20.7 per cent to 2005, well above the national average of 16.7 per cent.

3.5 Furthermore, 19.0 per cent of private sector dwellings failed the decent homes standard (compared to a national estimate of 33.1 per cent). Almost 80 per cent failed due to thermal comfort.

3.6 According to the Census 2001, 74.4 per cent of people in the district travel to work by car, whilst 46.9 per cent of households own two or more cars or vans. The district is in the top 25 local authorities in England and Wales for both statistics.

3.7 The EST report makes a number of key recommendations that are contained in the appendices of this report. The recommendations are divided into high, medium and low importance.

3.8 The EST report acknowledges that the Council's resources are limited. Therefore, the suggestions contained in the report have little or no cost implications for the District Council. There are several areas where the Council could make improvements and take advantage of funding available and various free services to assist them.

3.9 A key recommendation from the EST report is for Bromsgrove to produce an overarching energy or climate change strategy (that makes reference to existing strategies), incorporating social and private housing as well as the council's own estate and the wider community. Obtaining top-level support for this strategy and having a senior-level 'energy champion' will add weight to the topic and enable the council to achieve more in this area.

3.10 Bromsgrove has achieved a good result on implementing HECA to-date. However, with domestic per capital carbon emissions well above the national average, this is clearly an area the council needs to continue to focus on. More officer time could allow the council to lever in more in the way of external resources to tackle this area. The planned rolling survey provides an excellent opportunity for Bromsgrove to gather data on the energy efficiency of private

housing in the borough and ensure that information and resources are appropriately targeted.

3.11 It is important that Bromsgrove is perceived by householders as 'leading the way' and setting a good example, so the council should ensure it is doing its bit to reduce carbon emissions from its own estate. This will require establishing a system for monitoring energy consumption and then setting a target for reducing this.

3.12 The council can also make significant improvements in transport. Bromsgrove can make use of the Energy Saving Trust's free green fleet review service, which will result in a comprehensive report outlining a strategy that can help reduce vehicle emissions and reduce costs.

3.13 The Report is intended to give Bromsgrove District Council some direction in terms of the actions it should take. However, this is not an exact science and the priority will vary due to local circumstances and requirements, therefore this is intended to be a guide only.

3.14 The 'energy hierarchy' establishes the priority for all energy-related issues and should always be considered when deciding what action should be taken to reduce climate change:

3.15 The energy hierarchy –

- Reduce the need for energy
- Maximise energy efficiency
- Supply energy from renewable sources
- Where fossil fuels need to be used use them as efficiently as possible.

3.16 The EST report provides guidance and recommendations on five facets of the District Council's activities and areas of influence. These are:

- Corporate
- Housing including private housing
- Council's Own Estate
- Transport
- Wider Community.

3.17 The recommendations relating to these five areas are detailed in the appendix.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no significant financial implications in relation to expenditure in achieving the short term recommendations. There may be implications in relation to introducing new equipment such as metering systems. However, it is suggested that by introducing greater vigilance in terms of energy use, it may result in a reduction in expenditure on certain utilities.

4.2 Similarly the medium term recommendations are also without financial implications other than expenditure on training and the production of information on energy efficiency.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are not any immediate legal implications arising from this report, but there are indications that legislation is being prepared that will place statutory duties on councils to address issues associated with climate change. Furthermore, sustainability is informing many aspects of policy formulation and development.

6. Corporate Objectives

6.1 Currently climate change and energy efficiency can be linked to affordable housing, town centre redevelopment and community well-being. Undoubtedly the Council assuming a position on energy efficiency will contribute to improving its reputation.

7. Risk Management

7.1 Presently sustainability and climate change pose enormous risks to the work of the Council and the lives of local residents. In tackling energy use the Council is contributing to reducing the risks emanating from environmental degradation.

8. Other Sub Headings

Procurement Issues – There are potential implications for purchase of fuel, supplies and equipment.
Personnel Implications – There needs to be considered an energy champion.
Governance/Performance Management Considerations
Community Safety Considerations

Policy Considerations – Sustainability needs to inform all policies.
Environmental Considerations – Central to environmental considerations in terms of bio-diversity, transport and homes.
Equalities Implications – Our most vulnerable sections of the community may be most at risk of issues such as fuel poverty and contributing to inefficient use of energy.

Background Papers

Energy Saving Trust report for Bromsgrove District Council

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Appendix

Short term actions in order of priority

Priority	Action	Further information / advice / assistance
High	<p>Commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish top-level commitment, as this is critical for the allocation of resources and the provision of support to staff. Linked to this: ➤ Establish an 'energy champion' at a senior level. This individual should take the lead in developing partnerships and could also lead an internal steering group on energy. ➤ Set up a steering group on energy that includes representatives from eg environment, finance, regeneration, planning, building control, community planning etc. 	<p>Refer to the following publications: 'The value of in-house energy experts: a how-to guide produced by the local energy support team' and 'What are energy champions and how can they benefit your organisation?'.</p> <p>The EST has produced a briefing note on effective cross-department working.</p>
High	<p>Council estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Talk to the council's energy supplier about introducing different meters and establish a system for monitoring energy data, even for the buildings with low consumption of energy and use this information to benchmark Bromsgrove's performance with other councils. ➤ Consider applying to take part in the next round of the Carbon Trust's of the Local Authority Carbon Management programme. Phase 5 of this programme will be launched in May 2007 to 30 local authorities. ➤ Introduce a strategy and action plan with a target for reducing energy consumption by a given date. 	<p>Obtain further information using the Carbon Trust's benchmarking tools.</p> <p>To be considered for the next phase of the Local Authority Carbon Management programme, please email: alex.mitchel@carbontrust.co.uk.</p>
High	<p>Private housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase the time available for the HECA officer post, use energy efficiency data from the rolling survey to ensure resources are targeted appropriately, and set a target of bringing domestic carbon emissions below the national average. ➤ Focus on developing schemes to promote sustainable energy to owner 	<p>The Practical help team can provide advice and assistance with getting schemes off the ground.</p>

Priority	Action	Further information / advice / assistance
	occupiers.	
Medium	Transport: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If the council has a fleet of over 50 vehicles (including leased vehicles), apply to the Energy Saving Trust for a free green fleet review. ➤ Use the Energy Saving Trust's Practical help team to give free presentations regarding sustainable energy and sustainable road transport. 	Energy Saving Trust's green fleet review . Contact the team on 0870 241 2089 or email: practicalhelp@est.org.uk .
Medium	Council estate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Make use of the Carbon Trust's site-specific advice about energy efficiency, for all council-owned buildings. ➤ Make use of the Carbon Trust's Design Advice service when buildings are built or refurbished. ➤ Establish energy champions in each department or building and ensure they are responsible for keeping staff informed of energy saving tips and can keep an eye on simple things such as lights and monitors being left on. 	Carbon Trust site-specific advice . Carbon Trust's Design Advice

Medium term actions in order of priority

Priority	Action	Further information / advice / assistance
High	Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create an overarching energy strategy and action plan that makes reference to existing strategies such as the housing strategy and the climate change action plan. This strategy should contain specific targets that are in line with national targets and should include an action plan showing how the HECA target will be met. It should also include a section on improving the energy efficiency of the council's estate and a section on tackling energy in the wider community. ➤ Allocate resources for the implementation of this overarching action 	Refer to the ' Developing a climate change strategy ' briefing note. Refer to the briefing note ' Sustainable energy in community planning and sustainable development indicators '.

Priority	Action	Further information / advice / assistance
	plan.	
High	Affordable warmth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with local housing associations to ensure that assessments of affordable warmth are incorporated into assignment procedures. 	Use the Association for the Conservation of Energy’s fuel prophet tool .
High	Training staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish an energy training strategy and initiate an energy efficiency training programme with all staff (especially frontline staff). Include energy efficiency training in the induction programme for all new staff. This should ideally include key people from different departments. ➤ Initiate training with planners about energy efficiency, but more particularly renewable energy. This should include advice about how to ‘future-proof’ houses by exceeding the building regulations. ➤ Train all outreach staff on energy saving measures. 	Refer to the training chapter of 'Energy efficiency the guide' . Either consider in-house training, work with the EEAC, or use existing external courses. Check the Energy Saving Trust’s events pages for up-and-coming training courses. Practical help can offer free presentations to staff. Re: planners, see the London Renewables toolkit (although this is London specific, it is applicable to other urban areas).
High	Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use the ‘Meeting the 10 per cent’ publication to assist with the development of Bromsgrove’s policy for renewable energy generation. ➤ Consider producing Supplementary Planning Document on energy efficiency and renewables aimed at householders that encourages them to exceed the building regulations when extending or refurbishing their home. As part of this explore waiving requirements for planning permission for certain renewable energy sources for households. 	For further information refer to the publication ‘ Meeting the 10 per cent target for renewable energy in housing - a guide for developers and planners (CE190) ’ and contact the Energy Saving Trust’s Practical help service for further advice (0870 241 2089).
Medium	Council estate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assign energy costs to departments or buildings, based on actual use. Set targets for energy reduction and train staff to use less energy. Publicise the results and use them to raise further awareness. Any savings should be ring-fenced for energy efficiency investment. ➤ Consider applying to the Carbon Trust’s Salix Finance scheme for funding to kick-start an energy efficiency drive in the council’s estate. 	Salix Finance . Calculate climate change levy amounts on the climate change levy website .

Priority	Action	Further information / advice / assistance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Investigate the potential for purchasing green electricity for the council. When evaluating the cost implications, ensure you consider savings from not paying the climate change levy. ➤ Implement a green procurement policy of only buying A-rated appliances and occupying good or very good buildings. 	
Medium	<p>Council travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider changing mileage reimbursement rates to a level that does not encourage unnecessary travel. ➤ Introduce a system for monitoring business mileage patterns and challenging where alternative modes of transport are available. ➤ Introduce better facilities for cyclists. ➤ Talk to local public transport providers to see if a better service between the train station and the council's offices can be introduced during rush hour. 	Further information about travel planning can be found on the Energy Saving Trust website .
Medium	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that building control officers are trained and equipped to provide advice to householders regarding sustainable energy, when undertaking work that does not require planning permission. ➤ Brief any outreach staff on energy saving measures. 	Refer to the training chapter of 'energy efficiency the guide' .
Low	<p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with local businesses to promote travel plans and car sharing. ➤ When speaking with local businesses, the council should promote the Energy Saving Trust's free fleet advice service. ➤ If they haven't already done so, key council officers should join the Community Action for Energy network. 	Energy Saving Trust's free fleet advice service . Community Action for Energy .

Long term actions in order of priority

Priority	Action	Further information / advice / assistance
High	Funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keep up to date on all available funding ➤ Monitor the proportion of nationally available grant funding that is spent in the area to ensure that Bromsgrove is getting its 'fair share'. 	Use the Energy Saving Trust's funding database , or contact the Energy Saving Trust's Practical help team (0870 241 2089) if you have a particular project in mind.
Medium	Council estate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider whole life costing to ensure that energy efficiency is integrated into both refurbishment and new build, to overcome budget constraints. 	Using whole life costing as a basis for investments in energy efficiency - guidance (CE119) .
Medium	Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduce targets for carbon reduction into the local plan. ➤ Use planning conditions to help reduce traffic growth. 	