

**THE NOTTINGHAM DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
(Report by the Director of Operational Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Huntingdonshire has accommodated significant growth over the last four decades and is faced with even more rapid growth in the next two. The challenge the district faces is to ensure that the prosperity and quality of life of Huntingdonshire's residents is maintained, the local environment is preserved and enhanced and that we minimise our use of, and damage to, irreplaceable natural resources.
- 1.2 If all of these things can be achieved the development of Huntingdonshire will be sustainable. We will leave a legacy to future generations that will allow them to maintain the prosperity and quality of life we have enjoyed. If we fail we will have robbed them of that opportunity and, potentially, they will face risks and challenges to their existence that will make their lives much poorer.
- 1.3 Work has commenced on developing an environmental strategy that will identify the positive contributions that the Council is already making through its services, policies, strategies and regulatory activity. It will also identify gaps and propose an action plan for dealing with those gaps. Climate change will be the most pressing of three key themes that will be addressed through the strategy.
- 1.4 This report proposes signing the Nottingham Declaration On Climate Change to demonstrate the Council's commitment in this area and highlights the contribution that the Council is making already in mitigating carbon emissions.

2. THE NOTTINGHAM DECLARATION

- 2.1 The Council can act in three main ways to reduce its emissions of green house gasses and help the local community adapt to the impacts of climate change. It can act:

As Community A Leader - through the Local Strategic Partnership, it can work with other public and private agencies and the wider community to help cut the overall emissions of the district and develop an integrated response to climate change adaptation. The Council can also form direct partnerships with others in the community to address climate change

As A Service Provider - For all the services the Council provides it can ensure that the impacts of climate change are properly taken into account and emissions are cut as far as possible.

As an Estate Manager – The Council is a large employers and major consumers of energy and other resources. Through better management of transport and buildings, the Council can cut emissions and save money. Consideration can also be given to how the Council's estate can be better adapted to the changing climate.

2.2 It is proposed that the initial focus is on the Council's estate and services before developing a community-wide strategy. The advantage of focusing on the Council's own estate and services is that there is more direct control over all the actions that are agreed and outcomes can be easier to determine. The new headquarters and operations centre provide an opportunity to demonstrate best practice in design, construction and building management.

2.3 Subsequently a Community-Wide Action Plan can be developed to encourage other organisations and residents to take action, maximising the impact of and fulfilling the community leadership role that Government has set for Local Authorities. The Community Strategy already contains targets for reducing carbon emissions and promoting the use of renewable energy –

“Reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 12.5% by 2010 (estimated to be 990,000 tonnes in 2000) and increase the amount of energy generated from renewable resources to 14%”

2.4 The Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change (see Annex A) commits the Council to preparing a two-year action plan to progressively address the causes and impacts of climate change. The Energy Saving Trust has prepared an Action Pack for signatories to the Declaration which explains how the Council can reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and adapt to the climate changes that are already underway. In excess of 130 local authorities are already signatories including, locally, Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils.

3. EXISTING ACTIVITY

3.1 In preparing the environmental strategy (which will be submitted to Cabinet in January 2007) the Council's activity in the following areas will be highlighted -

- Awareness Raising
- Energy (consumption and use of renewable sources)
- Transport
- Water Conservation
- Waste
- Education
- Procurement
- Land Use (Spatial) Planning

3.2 We are already being successful in the following areas

- High rate of recycling
- Bringing forward new Planning Policies in our LDF
- Our Home Energy Efficiency Service
- Specifying Excellent BREEAM rating for our new headquarters.
- Adopting a Travel Plan
- Our work on Biodiversity, including the major project of Paxton Pits and The Great Fen Project.

3.3 The Council's contribution to schemes such as Paxton Pits and The Great Fen Project also deliver real benefits for the climate. Offsetting carbon emissions by the planting of trees that take up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere is an acknowledged strategy for slowing climate change. By continuing to pursue its support for enhancing the countryside the Council is delivering real economic and environmental benefits.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is recommended that Cabinet –

- (a) Note that the Environment Strategy will be brought forward for consultation in January 2007; and
- (b) Authorise the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to sign the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Energy Saving Trust Website

<http://www.est.org.uk/housingbuildings/localauthorities/NottinghamDeclaration/>

Contact Officers:

Richard Preston, Head of Technical Services - (01480) 388340.

The Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change

We acknowledge that

- Evidence shows that climate change is occurring.
- Climate change will continue to have far reaching effects on the UK's people and places, economy, society and environment.

We welcome the

- Social, economic and environmental benefits which come from combating climate change.
- Emissions targets agreed by central government and the programme for delivering change, as set out in the UK Climate Change Programme.
- Opportunity for local government to lead the response at a local level, encouraging and helping local residents, local businesses and other organisations - to reduce their energy costs, to reduce congestion, to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to improve the local environment and to deal with fuel poverty in our communities.
- Endorsement of this declaration by central government.

We commit our Council from this date _____ to

- Work with central government to contribute, at a local level, to the delivery of the UK Climate Change Programme, the Kyoto Protocol and the target for carbon dioxide reduction by 2010.
- Participate in local and regional networks for support.
- Within the next two years develop plans with our partners and local communities to progressively address the causes and the impacts of climate change, according to our local priorities, securing maximum benefit for our communities.
- Publicly declare, within appropriate plans and strategies, the commitment to achieve a significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from our own authority's operations, especially energy sourcing and use, travel and transport, waste production and disposal and the purchasing of goods and services.
- Assess the risk associated with climate change and the implications for our services and our communities of climate change impacts and adapt accordingly.
- Encourage all sectors in our local community to take the opportunity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions and to make public their commitment to action.
- Monitor the progress of our plans against the actions needed and publish the results.

_____ Council

acknowledges the increasing impact that climate change will have on our community during the 21st century and commits to tackling the causes and effects of a changing climate on our city/county/borough/district.

			
Leader of the Council	Chief Executive	Minister of State Climate Change and Environment	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister