

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council 25th January 2007
AUTHOR/S: Chief Executive / Democratic Services Manager

CLIMATE CHANGE MEETING

Purpose

1. To determine the detail of establishing a "Climate Change Meeting".

Background

2. At its meeting on 28th September 2006 (Minute 6d refers), Council resolved that:
 - *a Climate Change Meeting be established, meetings to be held on a set day at a set time, preferably on the same day as another meeting with a large attendance, as this might assist in adhering to sustainability principles regarding transport costs and member and officer time; and*
 - *costs be split proportionally between all portfolios or borne by Council as a whole because of the important impact of climate change on all portfolios.*
3. The Meeting will report directly to Council.

Considerations

4. Council now needs to consider the following issues:
 - Terms of Reference
 - Size and membership of the Meeting, and officer support
 - Name

The Climate Change Meeting will need to consider the following at its inaugural meeting:

- Purpose and Targets
- Opportunities for achieving added value to the Council's activities
- Relationships: Meeting, Portfolio Holder, lead Officers.
- Preferred meeting day and time

5. ***Terms of Reference***

Suggested Terms of Reference are:

- To identify activities and processes within South Cambridgeshire that could be considered as contributing to climate change, and to encourage residents to adopt practices that minimise or eliminate any adverse impact.
- To consider how the District Council can best achieve its corporate objectives and priorities so as to minimise or eliminate any adverse impact from climate change

by considering, among other things, the design and construction of new housing and public buildings.

- To consider how Members and staff of South Cambridgeshire District Council can contribute as individuals to the reduction or elimination of any adverse impact from climate change.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of energy management within South Cambridgeshire Hall, the Waterbeach Depot, and sheltered housing schemes, and identify any way in which improvements could be made that would reduce the Authority's carbon footprint.
- To address environmentally-friendly transport issues in relation to the Council's vehicle fleet, including its staff car leasing scheme, and to encourage 'green' commuting by Members, staff and residents.
- To examine the benefits of climate change mitigation measures in the context of their financial implications.

6. ***Size and Membership of Meeting, and officer support***

In determining the Meeting's size, Council may wish to consider

- Effectiveness
- Cost
- The greater flexibility of identifying rooms for smaller meetings part way through the year

At its Annual meeting in May 2006, Council decided that all formal Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member bodies should be established on a politically-proportional basis. This means, for example, that a nine-Member Climate Change body would consist of four Conservatives, three Liberal Democrats and two Independents. As is the case with meetings of the Cabinet, Regulatory Committees and Advisory Meetings, any Member of Council, not being a member of the relevant Member body, would be entitled to attend its meetings.

- Questions:**
- (a) What is the membership of the Meeting likely to be? Will it simply consist of SCDC members or would it help to widen the membership to include key Local Strategic Partnership representatives (possibly as part of an LSP sub-Meeting to take forward new climate change actions in the emerging Sustainable Communities Strategy)?
 - (b) Who will be the lead officer, and how will the Meeting function so as both to maximise its own effectiveness and minimise its demands on the wide-ranging responsibilities of the Strategic Development Officer?

7. ***Name***

Terms such as "advisory" and "Group" cause confusion as to the body's status. In the context of a Member body reporting to Council, rather than to any one Portfolio Holder or to the Cabinet, Members may wish to adopt a name such as 'Climate Change Working Party' (the Constitution Review Working Party reports directly to

Council), 'Climate Change Working Group', 'Climate Change Forum' or 'Climate Change Meeting'.

Options

8. Having previously agreed to the principle of a Climate Change body, Council's options have been summarised in paragraphs 5 to 7 inclusive of this report.

Implications

9. The Climate Change body would best be served by having a small budget of its own, therefore it is recommended that the sum of £3,000 be approved for inclusion in the 2007-2008 estimates. It is not anticipated that any budget will be required in the current financial year.

10.	Legal	The Meeting would need to recognise what is, and is not, within its statutory powers
	Staffing	A new Strategic Development Officer will be in post by March 2007.
	Risk Management	Any risks are already being managed by the day-to-day activities of officers, and the Climate Change body should take the opportunity to assist in advancing such management, where appropriate.
	Equal Opportunities	No specific implications

Consultations

11. No formal consultation has been necessary in preparing this report.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

12.	Affordable Homes	While climate change is a worldwide phenomenon, South Cambridgeshire District Council must focus on contributing to the local debate by working in partnership with parishes, the County Council, other stakeholders in Cambridgeshire, and with government agencies. It will be important, from the outset, to enhance people's quality of life by planning new developments in ways that reflect efforts to reduce carbon emissions, secure modal shift away from private cars towards public transport, such as the Guided Bus, and encourage the use of renewable energy, including in affordable homes.
	Customer Service	
	Northstowe and other growth areas	
	Quality, Accessible Services	
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Recommendations

13. It is **RECOMMENDED** that Council
- (a) Establish a 'Task and Finish' body called the Climate Change Working Group, consisting of nine District Council Members, appointed on a proportional basis, supported by relevant Council officers, and by independent experts co-opted as and when required, and detailed to present its report to Council within a set period. [in the event of further issues arising following that report, the Working Group could be re-established];
 - (b) Approve the Terms of Reference set out in paragraph 5, adding further terms as required;

- (c) Address the questions raised in paragraphs 6(a) and 6(b);
- (d) Approve the inclusion of £3,000 in the 2007-2008 estimates by way of budget for the group, and
- (e) Delegate to the Democratic Services Section the task of convening meetings within guidelines set by Members.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: None

Contact Officer: Ian Senior – Democratic Services Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713028
E-mail: ian.senior@scambs.gov.uk