

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Procurement and Efficiency 23 July 2009
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Corporate Manager (New Communities)

THE CAMBRIDGE CLIMATE CHANGE CHARTER

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to request that the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Procurement and Efficiency approve the promotion of an appropriately modified version of the Cambridge Climate Change Charter to businesses and organisations in South Cambridgeshire as a means of establishing commitment and a shared set of objectives to tackling the climate change agenda within this sector (a copy of the current version is attached).
2. This is not a key decision.

Background

3. The Cambridge Climate Change Charter was developed by Cambridge City Council and essentially is an acknowledgement, pledge and commitment document which is signed up to by organisations and gives them an opportunity to make a voluntary public statement to tackle shared climate change objectives.
4. Subject to further discussion, the City Council has made a preliminary indication that it would be very supportive of SCDC adopting and promoting the Charter and of making the necessary minor changes to remove references to Cambridge City Council and to make the text geographically non-specific.
5. Preliminary consideration of this issue was taken to the Council's Climate Change Working Group on 11 June 2009. The members of the group agreed the appropriateness and rationale of this request to the Portfolio Holder to support promotion of a geographically non-specific version of the Cambridge Climate Change Charter within South Cambridgeshire.
6. Further background information on the Charter can be found at:
www.cambridge.gov.uk/climatechange
7. No such charter or similar document is currently in place within South Cambridgeshire – although the District Council is a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration which is very much along the same lines but for local authorities.

Supporting context / rationale for decisions

8. The Council has recently entered into two pieces of work aimed at improving its position with regard to better understanding and facilitating the reduction of carbon emissions from the district's business and commercial sector. The first will provide information on the district's major carbon emitters within this sector and options available to the Council to help achieve tangible reductions. The second is a joint South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Council LSP-funded project to develop a

programme of practical support for workplaces across both local areas to work towards the objectives of the Cambridge Climate Change Charter.

9. The objectives of the Charter are of a generic nature and, with very minor alteration, could be applied to any organisation in any local area.
10. Although the joint LSP-funded practical support programme for workplaces could run across South Cambridgeshire without interested organisation signing up to an equivalent Charter for the district, it would seem to be a valuable opportunity missed not to do so.
11. The separate work being carried out at the moment into business and commercial carbon emissions for the district (due for completion end of July '09) will additionally raise the profile of climate change and sustainable energy for organisations which may well be interested in taking up the opportunity to make a voluntary commitment to tackle shared climate change objectives.
12. Some preliminary soundings have been taken with the City Council and they currently foresee no problems (only opportunities for dovetailed partnership working) with SCDC launching and promoting a complimentary Climate Change Charter with matching objectives.

Considerations

13. It is hard to see any specific disadvantages from seeking to bring forward, launch and promote a South Cambridgeshire equivalent of the Cambridge Climate Change Charter.
14. In the light of the work the Council is undertaking on business and commercial carbon emissions, which will include an action plan of prioritised measures to help organisations in the sector reduce their emissions, the promotion of such a charter would very likely be brought forward as an appropriate tool to unite commitment and support for tackling climate change.
15. The charter approach is an established method and one, if properly supported (which the practical help for the workplace project should do), with a good track record.
16. The benefits include:
 - an outward-facing public commitment;
 - a specific framework for action;
 - creation of a 'community' of signatories and open communication channels;
 - generates a foundation for discourse, support and action planning;
 - provides an evaluation base from the measures committed to;
 - can be offered to any organisation wishing to make a commitment;
 - providing an immediate and important point of departure for the workplace carbon reduction project.
17. Such a charter should also click-in very effectively with the framework of SCDC's approach to encouraging the transition to sustainable energy and lower carbon living through the district's parishes (the South Cambs Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership). Organisations and businesses within participating parishes can be encouraged to sign-up to the Charter or, perhaps less formally, work within its aspirations with a view to signing-up in the future.

18. It should also be noted that both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire LSPs have expressed a desire to work more closely together.
19. Some of the wording of the current Cambridge Climate Change Charter is clearly focused upon businesses and organisations in the City. This would need to be altered in order to facilitate promotion across South Cambridgeshire – the City Council has indicated that this could be done quite readily. It is felt that the title of the Charter should remain the same. The branding is well established and is locally relevant. It was also envisaged by the City Council that the name need not necessarily be considered geographically relevant (as is the case with the Nottingham Declaration).
20. In order to facilitate the inclusion of South Cambridgeshire, the geographical references to the City could be either added to or removed and replaced with a more general non-specific reference to 'local area'

Implications

21. Financial	Contained within the LSP (LPSA Reward Grant) funding awarded to the climate change workplace support project (in partnership with Cambridge City Council).
Legal	None arising.
Staffing	Strategic Sustainability Officer – within Service Plan delivery.
Risk Management	Potential for missed opportunity to develop a more integrated, comprehensive and efficient response to tackling the climate change agenda for organisations and businesses across South Cambridgeshire.
Equal Opportunities	None arising.

Consultations

22. SCDC Climate Change Working Group
Cambridge City Council

Effect on Strategic Aims

23.	Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.
	Can be used readily as an additional vehicle to support the Sustainable Parish Energy Project as part of the Council's work with parish councils on schemes for renewable energy and low-carbon living.
	Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all.
	Will support development and delivery by 2010 of the Climate Change Action Plan.
	Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.
	As above.
	Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all.
	None specific.
	Commitment to providing a voice for rural life.
	As above.

Recommendation

23. That the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Procurement and Efficiency approve the launch and promotion of an appropriately amended (i.e., geographically non-specific) version of the Cambridge Climate Change Charter for organisations and businesses across South Cambridgeshire.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- The Cambridge Climate Change Charter
- SCDC Climate Change Working Group 11 June 2009 paper of same title

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