

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Portfolio Holder for New Communities

20th May 2010

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Corporate Manager for Planning & New Communities

SCDC CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN 2010-13: RELEASE OF CONSULTATION DRAFT AND APPROVAL OF PUBLIC AND PARTNER CONSULTATION PROCESS

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to secure:
 - (a) permission to release the consultation draft of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2010-13 (CCAP), and;
 - (b) approval for the proposed consultation process and schedule.
2. The consultation CCAP is currently in the closing stages of full drafting and as such still has some contextual sections and action details to be finalised. These sections are in the process of being completed and will be finished before the proposed release to public and partner consultees from w/c 24:5:10. The plan as presented with this report has been reviewed and approved by both the member-led Climate Change Working Group and the Executive Management Team. In order to avoid delay in beginning the public and partner consultation process, the Portfolio Holder is requested to pass delegated authority for release of the finalised draft for these consultation purposes to the Corporate Manager for Planning and New Communities.
3. This is not a key decision as the CCAP does not raise specific new issues of Council policy. The Council is already committed to tackling the full climate change agenda as a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration, The Cambridge Climate Change Charter and the 10:10 national carbon reduction campaign.
4. What the CCAP does do, however, is open an important dialogue up between the Council and its partners as to the most appropriate methods and delivery mechanisms for reducing South Cambridgeshire's greenhouse gas emissions and its preparation for the impacts of climate change over the medium term. The CCAP as it stands is a working draft that, for its shorter term actions, is already tied into the relevant Council Service Plans for 2010/11. Delivery on climate change is not 'on hold' as the CCAP goes through consultation – the agenda is too pressing for this to be possible.
5. Elected representatives and local democracy are at the heart of community engagement. Thus Portfolio Holder approval, commitment and support for strategic responses and integrated delivery programmes, such as this CCAP, is important in terms of legitimating and validating the process. It is for this reason that the Portfolio Holder for New Communities (with responsibility for covering climate change-related matters) is asked to approve, and in effect formally put in motion, the consultative community engagement process that is designed to ensure that the CCAP is a living document with essential awareness and 'buy-in' from residents, communities and partner organisations across South Cambridgeshire and beyond.
6. The request for approval was first published in the February 2010 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

7. That the Portfolio Holder for New Communities:
 - (a) approve the public and partner consultation process outlined in this report as regards the release of the consultation draft of the Council's new Climate Change Action Plan 2010-13, and;
 - (b) delegate approval of the finalised draft for consultation release (i.e. the fully completed version of that attached to this report) to the Corporate Manager for Planning and New Communities (scheduled for w/c 24:5:10)

Background

8. In 2002 the Council signed the Nottingham Declaration and in 2005 published a Climate Plan. Much has changed since then, especially in terms of the required extent and urgency of response to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the effects of climate change. We have seen very significant national policy shifts and developments since the Climate Change Act 2008 was placed in the statute books with its legally binding UK target of an 80% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050.
9. The new local government performance framework (first reported through for 2008/09) introduced three very specific climate change national indicators: NI 186 - per capita CO₂ emissions for the local authority area; NI 188 - extent of preparedness to respond to the impacts of climate change, and; NI185 - direct CO₂ emissions from local authority operations. The former are LAA indicators and have very specific targets attached to them for delivery by the end of 2010/11.
10. The original 2005 SCDC Climate Plan laid a firm foundation for its time but the pressure to deliver significant carbon savings and prepare effectively for climate change have seen the Sustainability element of the New Communities Service Plan stretch the Climate Plan's influence to and beyond the point of usefulness. A replacement was therefore placed on the delivery list for 2009/10.
11. The drafting of the new CCAP has been guided and assisted by the Council's Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) in several sessions over the past 6-8 months.
12. It was recognised and agreed that a comprehensive Plan was required. Not one that simply laid out a set of actions but, through seeking to put across a full understanding of climate change and what it means in the context of South Cambridgeshire, also sought to engage with its audience by making it clear why the plan was proposing the actions as put forward. Establishing this district and subject-specific underlying rationale would also mean that the Council would be better placed to handle new climate change-related issues and opportunities as they arose outside of the CCAP's specified array of actions. This approach was endorsed by the Council's Executive Management Team at its meeting on 24:03:10.

Considerations

13. As indicated previously, due to time-constraints this draft of the CCAP is not yet fully complete – sections that require further authoring have been marked-up as such. It is felt however that this draft is sufficiently complete to allow it through for Portfolio Holder consideration in the context of approval for release for public and partner consultation on the proviso that delegated authority be passed to the Corporate Manager for Planning and New Communities to ensure that the consultation process is not formally started until the current draft is fully completed.

14. The following table outlines the proposed consultation process over a 12 week period (following the guidelines of the Cambridgeshire Compact):

Audience	Schedule	Consultative activity
(preparation)	by w/c 24/5	Finalise full consultation draft Draft 4 page Summary document
All	w/c 24/5	Place Summary document & full consultation draft on SCDC website
All	w/c 24/5	Press release & front page website
Parish Councils, key public bodies & other local strategic partners	24/5-4/6	Despatch Summary doc to all Parish Councils, key public bodies and other local strategic partners
SCDC Members	w/c 7/6	Member Briefing & Bulletin
SCDC key staff identified for CCAP delivery	w/c 14/6	SCDC Service workshop
All SCDC staff	w/c 21/6	Lunchtime seminar/briefing
Local climate change 'movers & shakers'	w/c 28/6	Expert Panel workshop
Joint LSP Board	nearest scheduled meeting	Joint LSP briefing
All	w/c 9/8	Deadline for receipt of all consultation responses
final steps...		
Climate Change Working Group	soonest scheduled meeting	Consider post-consultation revised draft
Portfolio Holder for New Communities	soonest scheduled meeting – pls add a target date	Consider final draft for adoption
Full Council	as/if required	Adoption

Implications

15. Financial	Sstaff time and limited/controlled print run
Legal	None
Staffing	Principal co-ordinator: Team Leader Sustainable Communities
Risk Management	Failure to meaningfully and effectively engage runs risk of producing a sterile and under-performing plan
Equal Opportunities	Access for all central tenet of consultation/engagement process
Climate Change	Self-evident

Consultations

16. Climate Change Working Group
Executive Management Team

Effect on Strategic Aims

17. Consultation process directly supports the council aim that:
'We are a committed and listening council providing first class services accessible to all.'
18. The CCAP itself supports the council aim that:
'We are committed to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family.'

Conclusions / Summary

19. This report seeks Portfolio Holder approval to initiate the formal consultation process (over a 12 week period) relating to public and partner engagement with the adoption and delivery of the Council's new Climate Change Action Plan 2010-13.

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

Executive Management Team, 24/03/10, Agenda and Minutes
Climate Change Working Group, 08/04/10, Agenda and Minutes

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