

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

21 SEPTEMBER 2009

1. ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY AND ADOPTION OF THE NOTTINGHAM DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and Clerk.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Authority note and endorse the Service's Environmental Strategy 2009/2010, and
- 1.2 THAT the Authority note the progress that has been made during 2008/09 in this area, as summarised in the report on performance, included within the same document, which has been previously circulated to Members.
- 1.3 THAT the Authority signs up to the Nottingham Declaration, details of which is attached in Appendix A.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 This report is submitted to the Authority to make Members aware of the adaptation and mitigation strategies being adopted and promoted by the Service to tackle climate change.
- 2.2 This report is also submitted to request that the Authority considers and signs up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Climate change is one of the most significant issues facing the world today. The Stern Report in 2006 highlighted the economic business case for urgently addressing the challenges of climate change. Since then there have been various Central Government programmes and specific legislation, such as the Climate Change Act 2008, to actively encourage the public sector to manage and reduce their carbon emissions. In 2010, the Carbon Reduction Commitment will be introduced. This is a mandatory emissions trading scheme to cut carbon emissions from large commercial and public sector organisations.

- 3.2 The first West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) Environmental Strategy was published in March 2008 and there have been a number of successful projects resulting from this, which are publicised in the strategy for 2009/2010. A copy of this document has been previously sent to Members and is also available on the West Midlands Fire Service website at www.wmfs.net and selecting the 'Our Performance' option.
- 3.3 The Nottingham Declaration was established in Nottingham in 2000 and since then over 300 Local Authorities, including Fire Authorities, have added their name to it. The Declaration is a pledge to address the causes of climate change and to prepare the local community for its impacts. It shows public commitment to the climate change agenda.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The matters contained in this report do not relate to a direct policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 introduces a legally binding framework to cut carbon emissions. The Carbon Reduction Commitment which has implications for the Authority, will take effect in April 2010.
- 5.2 In addition to the above, there are three national performance indicators relating to climate change, that are relevant to the Fire and Rescue Authority via the Local Area Agreements. In the near future, the Comprehensive Area Assessment will assess how well Fire and Rescue Authorities are preparing for climate change.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of preparing the Service's Environmental Strategy and the progress made has been met from existing budget provision. Any costs involved in tackling climate change would be met currently from existing budgets.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Stern Report

LGA Report: 'Preparing for the Carbon Reduction Commitment'

The Climate Change Act 2008

VIJ RANDENIYA
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUE PHELPS
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY

WHY SIGN THE NOTTINGHAM DECLARATION?

The Nottingham Declaration

Over 300 local authorities have added their names to the Nottingham Declaration and pledged to systematically tackle climate change. Isn't it time that you joined them?

Launched in October 2000 in Nottingham, the last 3 years have witnessed a massive growth in the number of councils signing the Declaration.

The Declaration recognises the central role of local authorities in leading society's response to the challenge of climate change. By signing the Declaration councils pledge to systematically address the causes of climate change and to prepare their community for its impacts. Although your council is probably already doing many things to tackle climate change, signing is:-

- A public commitment to take action
- A catalyst for a more systematic response

The Challenge of Climate Change

There is now consensus among the international community that the world is warming and that this is mainly the result of human activities. The evidence for climate change is compelling and there is overwhelming agreement among scientists that human activity is the cause. There is a growing understanding of how the impacts will vary across the world. The UK climate is expected to become warmer, with wetter winters, drier summers, and more extreme weather events, such as heavy rain and high winds. As a community leader your council has a central role in leading society's response to the challenge of climate change by:

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been reviewing worldwide research on climate change since 1988. In its latest report, published in November 2007, it concluded that:-

Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level.

According to the IPCC:-

- Eleven of the last twelve years (1995-2006) rank among the twelve warmest years since 1850.
- Global average sea level has risen since 1961 at an average rate of 1.8 mm/year and since 1993 at 3.1.
- Helping your local community to become resilient to extreme weather events.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the council's own buildings, services and the community.

Create your own version of the Declaration:

Some councils have signed a local version of the Declaration. We welcome local versions, but ask that the fundamental commitments contained within the Nottingham Declaration are retained.

Five reasons to sign the Declaration

1. Reassure your residents that you are taking climate change seriously.

A recent survey by the Local Government Association found that 76% of adults think councils have a key role to play in tackling climate change and 70% said that climate change should be a top priority for their council. Almost three quarters of all signatories have publicised their decision to sign in their local press.

2. Strengthen your council's response.

A survey of local authorities commissioned by the LGA Climate Change Commission found that 84% of local authorities that have or are developing a climate change strategy believed that signing the Nottingham Declaration was a key driver. Similarly, a recent survey by the Energy Saving Trust found that 80% of respondents believed that signing the Declaration helped to build member and senior officer momentum within the council.

3. Perform well.

From 2009 the new local performance framework will encompass climate change. Three national performance indicators and the new Comprehensive Area Assessments will assess how well local authorities are preparing for climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

4. Save money and attract new resources.

Adapting buildings and other infrastructure for severe weather can help to avoid and reduce the high costs of emergency measures and repairing damage. There are many examples of local authorities that have made significant savings by introducing sustainable energy measures and there are a range of resources available to local authorities that are planning climate change and energy initiatives.

5. Improve the quality of life of local communities. Preparing for the impacts of climate change (adaptation) will help to protect your communities from the worst effects of severe weather events, such as flooding, storms, high winds and heat waves. Action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) can bring other benefits to the local community, such as: lower fuel bills; improved housing stock; reduced business costs; more competitive businesses; improved public transport; better cycling and walking facilities; and improved air quality.

As the evidence for climate change becomes increasingly compelling, so there is an escalating international and national response. Many initiatives will impinge directly on local government:

At the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali in December 2007, participants agreed that "deep cuts in global emissions will be required" and to enter into discussions for a post-Kyoto agreement to be agreed by the end of 2009.

The Climate Change Bill sets legally binding targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the UK by at least 60% from 1990 levels by 2050 and by 26 to 32% by 2020 and a duty on local authorities to report on how they are addressing the risks associated with climate change.

From 2010 the Carbon Reduction Commitment, announced in the Energy White Paper 2007 will apply mandatory emissions trading to cut carbon emissions from large

90% of Nottingham Declaration signatories say they would recommend signing to other councils and none advise against.

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 West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority, 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 result

West Midlands Fire Service

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 the West Midlands.

			
Chief Fire Officer	Chairman Fire & Rescue Authority	Minister for the Environment DEFRA	Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Communities and Local Government