

Report to: Cabinet
Date of meeting: 2nd December 2013
Report of: Head of Customer and Community Services
Title: Sign up to LGA Climate Local Initiative

1.0 **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 In 2003 Mayor Dorothy Thornhill signed the Nottingham Declaration and made a public commitment to tackle climate change. Since then Watford Borough Council has adopted the Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan. Mitigating the extent of climate change has taken place through various schemes and the council has lead on the mitigation by signing up to and delivering a Local Authority Carbon Management Plan which aims to reduce carbon emissions by 30% over 5 years.
- 1.2 Climate Local is an overarching declaration to deliver on local plans. It succeeds the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and offers a framework that can reflect local priorities and opportunities for action. It supports councils' efforts both to reduce carbon emissions and to improve their resilience to the anticipated changes in the climate.
- 1.3 Climate Local has been designed to help councils across the country to capture the opportunities and benefits of action on a changing climate, through saving on their energy bills, generating income from renewable energy, attracting new jobs and investment in 'green' industries, reducing flood risks and managing the impacts of extreme weather.
- 1.4 It can be used as tool to enable us to share our successes and learn from other LA's. As Watford Borough Council is a proactive council in terms of sustainability it would not be required to do more than it has already committed to do however access to the shared learning might provide us with ideas for future projects. WBC would be one of the leading districts in Herts by signing the declaration, as Broxbourne have already signed up and other Herts districts are also considering signing up.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That WBC sign up to Climate Local, and create an action plan consisting of work plans the council is already committed to doing. The council will be able to use Climate Local to promote its progress as well as use the network to learn from other authorities. For Climate Local declaration please see Appendix 3.
- 2.2 That the Portfolio Holder for Community and Customer Services be delegated to approve the action plan for publication

Contact Officer:

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Report approved by: Alan Gough, Head of Community and Customer Services

3.0 **DETAILED PROPOSAL**

3.1 Watford Borough Council is committed to sustainability. Over the last 10 years the council has demonstrated this by signing up to the Nottingham Declaration and adopting a Local Authority Carbon Management Plan, Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan and various schemes have taken place under them.

3.2 Climate Local is an overarching declaration to deliver on local plans. It succeeds the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and offers a framework that can reflect local priorities and opportunities for action. It supports councils' efforts both to reduce carbon emissions and to improve their resilience to the anticipated changes in the climate.

3.3 Climate Local has been designed to help the councils across the country to capture the opportunities and benefits of action on a changing climate, through saving on their energy bills, generating income from renewable energy, attracting new jobs and investment in 'green' industries, reducing flood risks and managing the impacts of extreme weather.

3.4 It can be used as tool to enable us to share our successes and learn from other LA's. As Watford Borough Council is a proactive council in terms of sustainability it would not be required to do more than it has already committed to do however access to the shared learning might provide us with ideas for future projects.

3.5 Once we have signed-up, we will be asked to set out the commitments and actions we intend to undertake locally. We will be asked to do this within six months of signing-up. Whilst it is up to councils to determine their own local commitments and actions, all councils should be able to put forward a number of commitments and actions across the mitigation and adaptation agendas. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the commitments are realistic and deliverable.

3.6 Examples of commitments that could be made in the action plan are

- In accordance to our Carbon Management plan we will work to reduce the council's Carbon emissions by 30% by 2015/16 from the base year 2009/10
- We will refresh our Climate Change Action plan to ensure its targets are relevant and realistic targets are set for adaptation and mitigation.
- We will help businesses and organisations to reduce their Carbon Emissions as well as benefit from the opportunities Climate Change presents, as set out by the Green Deal.

For further examples please see Appendix 2

3.7 As a Climate Local council we will be actively encouraged to share our learning and experiences with other councils through the LGA Knowledge Hub and face-to-face learning opportunities facilitated by the LGA. We will also be able to publish our commitments and actions so that we can demonstrate how we are taking a lead.

3.8 To celebrate our achievements and to let our communities and stakeholders know how we are getting on, we will be asked to share progress on our commitments and actions once a year. Every year, we will need to refresh our commitments and actions to ensure that they remain current and relevant to local priorities.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

Possible implications are listed below. Paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 must be completed in all cases. Paragraph 4.3 must be completed if the report relates to a new policy.

4.1 **Financial**

4.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments there are no specific financial implications to the recommendation of this report.

4.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no legal implications in this report. Signing up to Climate Local is not entering a legal obligation. Failure to meet our commitments in the action plan will be a reputational risk.

4.3 Potential Risks

Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Overall score
<i>E.g</i> Not signing up – Missing opportunities:			
- to share with and learn best practice from other Local Authorities	1	4	4
- demonstrate Watford Borough Council's commitment to promoting sustainability.	1	3	3
Signing up and failing to deliver action plan	1	4	4
Those risks scoring 9 or above are considered significant and will need specific attention in project management. They will also be added to the service's Risk Register.			

4.4 Staffing

4.4.1 None

4.5 Accommodation

4.5.1 None

4.6 Community Safety

4.6.1 None

4.7 Sustainability

4.7.1 Climate Local offers the opportunity to increase partnership working and the ability to learn from others on initiatives that the council may consider, which will enable the council to deliver on sustainability more efficiently.

Appendices

Appendix 1

LGA Climate Local Information pack for councils

Appendix 2

Watford Borough Council Climate Local Brief (Includes signatories)

Appendix 3

Climate Local Declaration

Background Papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

File Reference

- none