

Report for discussion

Report to	Sustainable Development Panel 28 September 2011	Item
Report of	Head of strategy & programme management	Urgent item
Subject	Draft Environmental Strategy 2011-2014	to be considered at the chair's discretion

Purpose

To seek members views about the draft Environmental Strategy 2011-2014.

Recommendations

Members are invited to give their views on the draft Environmental Strategy 2011-2014 before it goes to Cabinet on 12 October 2011.

Financial Consequences

Generally, all of the work in the action programme of the new environmental strategy has been taken from existing council work plans and programmes and associated strategic documents. Many of the projects within the environmental strategy aim to save money as well as environmental resources.

However the financial (as well as social) costs of taking no action to tackle climate change and other environmental issues could be significant. For example, assuming that energy costs rise at a very modest rate of 3.5% per year, if the council achieves its 6% reduction target by 2013 the authority would save approximately £900,000 via reduced energy bills. This would clearly increase significantly if the energy cost were to rise more quickly or if the authority fails to achieve the 30% target set by the Cabinet.

There is a small delivery fund for the Environmental Strategy which is already budgeted for. Projects within the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme are able to apply for match funding via Norwich City Councils "spend to save" funds and government SALIX 0% spend to save loans.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority "Strong and prosperous city – working to improve quality of life for residents, visitors and those who work in the city now and in the future" and the strategic priority " Opportunities for all".

Contact Officers

Richard Willson
Russell O'Keefe

01603 212312
01603 212908

Background Documents

None

Further Information:

Previous Environmental Strategy 2008 - 2010

<http://www.norwich.gov.uk/Environment/Ecolssues/Documents/EnvironmentalStrategy.pdf>

Environmental Statement 2010 - 2011

<http://www.norwich.gov.uk/Environment/Ecolssues/Documents/EnvironmentalStatement.pdf>

Report

Background

1. The global challenge of climate change is significant and requires a decarbonisation of the economy and a move away from the use of fossil fuels. The Climate Change Act 2008 set out targets to reduce carbon emissions in the UK by 50% by 2025, and at least an 80% by 2050. The UK is the first country to pass legislation which has introduced a legally binding framework to tackle the dangers of climate change.
2. Ipsos MORI's most recent survey on climate change and energy supply shows that, despite a decline in concern about climate change, the majority of the British public still believe the climate is changing and say they are prepared to act on this.
3. Attention continues to focus upon the role of Local Government in helping to meet this challenge. The LG Group and the Department of Energy and Climate Change have recently reached an agreement setting out how local and central government will work together to tackle climate change. This will help local government work toward its aim of reducing its own carbon emissions by on average 30% and support homeowners to save on average £300 on their energy bills.
4. Norwich City Council has already made significant progress in reducing our emissions via our carbon management programme and the use of eco technology. For example we achieved an 8% reduction in our carbon emissions during 2010/11.
5. However, climate change and global warming are not the only environmental issues which can have a negative impact or influence on society. The past 20 years have seen a growing realisation that the current model of development is unsustainable. In other words, we are living beyond our means. From the loss of biodiversity with the felling of rainforests or over fishing to the negative effect our consumption patterns are having on the environment and the climate.
6. Unless we start to make real progress toward reconciling these contradictions we face a future that is less certain and less secure. We need to make a decisive move toward more sustainable development.
7. This strategy enables the council to use the information and skills that have been built up via our previous work programme to enable a real step change to the delivery of a more sustainable city. However, the strategy is realistic and recognises the council's significant and continuing resource pressures.
8. Members are invited to give their view on the draft Environmental Strategy 2011 -2014 before it goes to Cabinet via the Environmental Strategy manager Richard Willson.

Appendix 1 – Draft Environmental Strategy 2011 - 2014