

**Report to** Sustainable development panel  
27 February 2013  
**Report of** Executive head of strategy, people and democracy  
**Subject** Climate Local

**Item**

**7**

**Purpose**

To consider the “Climate Local” commitment.

**Recommendation**

To consider the report and comment before it is formally considered by cabinet in March.

**Corporate and service priorities**

The report helps to meet the corporate priorities – Safe and clean city, Prosperous city and Value for money services

**Financial implications**

None in addition to those already budgeted for.

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Bremner – Environment and development

**Contact officers**

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**Background documents**

None

# Report

## Climate Local

1. Climate Local was launched by the Local Government Association (LGA) in July 2012 and succeeds the Nottingham Declaration.
2. The LGA state it is “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”.

## The commitment

3. Local Authorities sign-up to demonstrate their commitment to addressing climate change and to challenge themselves to build on their existing achievements. Climate Local provides a way to show council leadership on climate change. In this respect it is not unlike our own annual Environmental Statement.
4. Climate Local aims to:
  - Drive and inspire councils to act on the causes and effects of climate change
  - Enable councils to demonstrate their commitment, ambition and achievements
  - Enable councils to show collective leadership on climate change
  - Provide a framework through which councils can organise and plan their journey in addressing climate change
  - Provide a forum for peer to peer learning and support for councils.

## What actions are required in signing up to the commitment?

5. Local authorities set out what actions they intend to undertake locally to reduce carbon emissions and respond to changes in the climate within their own operations, services and local community.
6. Local authorities set out their level of ambition and how they are going to monitor and demonstrate their achievements and also share with other local authorities:
  - What actions they are undertaking and our ambitions
  - Progress; and
  - Learning from experiences and achievements.

## What is the difference between the Nottingham Declaration and Climate Local?

7. On 20 September 2006 the Executive approved Norwich City Council signing up to the Nottingham Declaration. The Nottingham Declaration involved council's signing up to a set of very high level commitments to try to combat climate change both on a national and local level. The Declaration has nationally come in for some criticism as it is mainly aspirational, and does not require local authorities to set clear targets to reduce climate change within a given timeframe.
8. The Climate Local commitment seems to go further than the Nottingham Declaration by adding in a further layer of accountability. It asks council's to publish their actions and their progress. However, Norwich City Council already does this through the publishing of its annual Environmental Statement.

## **Current position**

9. As of 30 November 2012 33 local authorities have signed up to Climate Local, and approximately another 30 more have papers going to committee in order to seek approval to sign up. This is out of a total of 345 district, county, metropolitan borough and unitary councils (18%). This would suggest that the scheme has yet to gather the critical mass required.

## **What does the Climate Local commitment require?**

10. Signing up to Climate Local doesn't seem to require anything in terms of additional work to what we are already delivering and what we propose to deliver in the future through the Environmental Strategy, Affordable Warmth Strategy and the actions reported in our bi-annual Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) report and reporting through the Environmental Statement. Essentially it's asking for us to:
  - Document how we are going to set measurable local commitments to reduce carbon emissions and reduce climate impacts.
  - To publish these commitments and our progress against them
  - Share learning with other councils
  - Regularly update our commitments

## **Reporting**

11. The Climate Local commitment requires that local authorities set locally-owned and determined commitments, which are specific, measurable and challenging. Progress against the commitments must be published and the commitments must be regularly refreshed to ensure they are current and continue to reflect local priorities. Timescales are not defined.
12. Norwich City Council publishes its environmental priorities for the city in the tri-annual Environmental Strategy. The annual Environmental Statement provides a yearly update on progress made against these priorities, and what each service aims to achieve in the forthcoming year.
13. From March 2013 an additional layer of reporting will come into force with the requirement by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) for local authorities to submit their HECA (Home Energy Conservation Act) reports for the first time in March 2013.
14. In the guidance provided by DECC on HECA reporting, signing up to Climate Local is thought to be positive and seen as providing 'a vehicle for authorities to publicly demonstrate any ambitions that they set out in their further (HECA) reports'.
15. In the HECA guidance, provided by DECC, a model action plan is provided and signing up to Climate Local is given as an example of an action that an authority could take to help to achieve local energy efficiency ambitions and priorities. Lewisham council has stated that they propose to link the Climate Local reporting directly with the HECA report.

## **Conclusion**

16. It would appear from the current level of take up that the Climate Local scheme is still very much in its infancy.

17. However, as Norwich City Council is already delivering and reporting on much of what is required for an authority to sign up to Climate Local it would be worth considering signing up sooner rather than later, particularly as it could link in well to the forthcoming HECA report due in March 2013.
18. Since it would appear that signing the Climate Local commitment would require very little extra resource in addition to what we are already delivering, and given the fact that it would prove positive to our first HECA report it would seem preferable to sign up to the commitment now.