



# **Climate Change Update – Carbon Reduction and Climate Adaptation Action (CRACA) Plan**

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Community Protection**

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## **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To comment on local and national climate change issues and present a longer term 'Carbon Reduction and Climate Adaptation Action (CRACA) Plan for approval.

## **BACKGROUND AND EXTERNAL CONSULTATION**

### **Introduction**

2. The debate on climate change has shifted in recent years from whether we need to act, to how much we need to do, and how quickly. There is unequivocal evidence that global warming is taking place. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on climate change has concluded that there is more than a 90% certainty that climate change is caused by human activity. Atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, have already increased by 36% since the industrial revolution and the concentration is accelerating as global emissions increase. Storms, droughts, flooding and heat waves will become more intense and sea levels will rise significantly over the next 50 to 100 years. The extent to which these events are minimised is dependant on speedy interventions by both national governments and local communities.

## National position

3. The UK government has progressively signed up to tighter controls on greenhouse gas emissions. Initially, the Kyoto protocol committed the government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5 % by 2010, using 1990 as the baseline. The UK Climate Change Programme published in 2000 set a new target to reduce national greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2010, using the same 1990 baseline. By 2003, an Energy White Paper set a new goal to reduce emissions by 60% by 2050.
4. The Climate Change Bill, which is about to enter the statute books, will set legally binding targets on the government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The original Bill required a 60% reduction by 2050 using 1990 as the baseline, although in recent weeks the government has tightened this to an 80% reduction by 2050. The legislation aims to achieve some of this reduction through a 'statutory emissions trading scheme', whereby large organisations will be given a carbon emission cap in five-year cycles. Middlesbrough Council will come within the trading scheme. If an organisation exceeds its carbon allocation it would have to buy credits at auction. Organisations that emit less than their carbon allowance will be able to sell spare credits at auction.
5. In 2006, the Stern Review looked at the economics of climate change and concluded that reducing greenhouse gas emissions should be viewed as a worthwhile investment to avoid future financial risks. The Review estimated the cost of effective action to be around 1% of GDP by 2050, whereas the cost on inaction could see global consumption per head fall by up to 20%. Both the Stern Review and an International Panel on Climate Change concluded that delaying more effective action by only five years could have a significant impact on our ability to tackle climate change.
6. In 2007, the Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' recommended that Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements were the best route to securing responsible action to promote a better response to climate change. Subsequently, three indicators were added to the new list of 200 national indicators. These are -:
  - NI 185. Carbon dioxide reduction from local authority operations
  - NI 186. Carbon dioxide reduction per capita in the Local Authority area
  - NI 188. Planning to adapt to climate change
7. A Royal Commission Report, published in March 2007, called for a more strategic approach to energy planning, low carbon technologies and renewable energy, and more incentives through innovation funding. The LGA have also produced a climate change report promoting green travel, energy efficiency, climate adaptation plans etc, and promoted the significant role of local authorities in delivering national priorities.

## **Local position**

- 8.** Middlesbrough was one of the first councils to launch a Climate Change Community Action Plan. Following a full year of consultation led by the Mayor and Councillor Coppinger, the Action Plan and supporting framework was published in 2004. Our approach won an international Energy Globe award, a national Carbon Trust award, a regional Renew Tees Valley Award and a Sustainable Communities Commendation from the Local Government Chronicle / LGA.
- 9.** Our Climate Change Community Action Plan has helped Middlesbrough reduce its emissions by 45,000 tonnes over the 3 years ending in December 2005; the latest date for which government statistics are available. This amounts to a 4.6% reduction. The Plan is delivered through 'annual work programmes' and commits the Middlesbrough community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 12.5% over the 2002 to 2012 period, or 1.25% a year on average; so we are on course to meet the target.
- 10.** We operate an energy 'Invest to Save' programme which is match funded by £100,000 from the Carbon Trust. Over 2008/9 and 2009/10, an additional £60,000 has been allocated through the capital programme to install small-scale demonstration renewable energy systems in high profile locations. A feasibility study has been commissioned to look at potential locations for wind turbine technology.
- 11.** In 2007, international experts joined local and national delegates at a national climate change conference held at in Middlesbrough. Over 250 delegates attended the conference, which was opened by the Mayor. The 14 speakers included Sir John Harman, the Chair of the Environment Agency; Maryke van Staden, the European manager for an International Climate Change Organisation; Pen Hadow, a polar explorer and Sara Parkin, co-founder of Forum for the Future. We are holding a second national conference in Middlesbrough in March 2009 with a high profile list of speakers including a Secretary of State; TV Climate Change presenter, Iain Stewart; Sara Parkin from Forum for the Future and famous authors on Climate Change.
- 12.** Since 2004, when we published our Climate Change Community Action Plan, the same framework and targets have been adopted by the Tees Valley Climate Change Partnership.
- 13.** Middlesbrough's leading edge work on tackling climate change has been acknowledged by a prestigious Beacon Council award for 2008 - 2009. The rigorous application process included lengthy interviews between the Beacon inspectors and the Mayor, Executive members, officers and our Beacon partners. Middlesbrough is one of only six councils to receive the Beacon award and the only council north of Worcestershire.

## **Carbon Reduction and Climate Adaptation (CRACA) Action Plan**

14. Middlesbrough's approach to developing and implementing a Climate Change Community Action Plan, highlighted in paragraphs 8 and 9, has been effective. The Action Plan was the cornerstone in the successful Beacon Council bid. Since then, the Council has adopted the 'One Planet Living' model in our new Sustainability Policy endorsed by the Executive in April 2008. National policies are becoming more focused on the need to plan for longer-term reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the inevitable change in climate that will occur over the coming decades.
15. All of this, together with the statutory carbon allowances that will be allocated to large organisations through the anticipated Climate Change Act, raise the importance of Middlesbrough Council having a longer term planning framework for climate change. The new framework will need to give equal importance to carbon savings and climate adaptation. The attached Carbon Reduction and Climate Adaptation Action (CRACA) Plan has been developed in consultation with all council services. This CRACA Plan provides the mechanism to better integrate climate change interventions into Service Plans in 2009 and beyond. The Action Plan will keep Middlesbrough at the leading edge of climate change intervention action planning and help meet national and local priorities.

## **OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT**

16. The attached CRACA Plan will help managers develop more effective medium term and long term actions to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the inevitable consequences of climate change, so setting an example to the rest of the community. The CRACA Action Plan will be reviewed at least annually.
17. The CRACA Action Plan considers risks and costs under each planned action.
18. Under National Indicator 188, 'planning to adapt to climate change', a work programme has been published to identify how Middlesbrough will reach the maximum score of Level 4 by December 2010. This involves complex risk assessment and partnership consultative processes, which will lead to a comprehensive Climate Adaptation Plan.

## **FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial**

19. The CRACA Action Plan recognises that the planned actions have to be affordable. The main delivery mechanism will be through annual service plans. Any bids for additional resources would be subject to the established budget reporting and bidding process. In some instances, there will be longer term savings. As the CRACA Plan is a high level strategic document, some of the financial costs and savings are indicative, and the exact costs and savings will be addressed through service plans and annual budget setting.

## **Ward Implications**

20. Measures to tackle climate change benefit the whole town and promote the long-term well being of the whole community and wider environment.

## **Legal Implications**

21. The CRACA Action Plan will help the council comply with anticipated requirements in the Climate Change Bill, which will require a separate assessment when all details are published

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

22. The Executive are recommended to -:
  - Note the climate change issues identified in this report and approve the attached\* Carbon Reduction and Climate Adaptation (CRACA) Action Plan subject to resources being identified at the time.
  - Agree to consider a progress report in 2010.

(\*A copy of the CRACA Plan is available on the Council's COMMIS system – see the Executive agenda for 7 January 2009.)

## **REASONS**

23. The recommendation is consistent with the Council's Corporate Sustainability Policy approved by the Executive in April 2008. A guiding principle in this Policy is a commitment towards the 'One Planet Living' framework including working towards zero carbon activities to tackle climate change.
24. The CRACA Plan provides a corporate framework to improve performance against the three national climate change indicators; NI 185, Ni 186 and NI 188, identified in paragraph 6.
25. The CRACA Plan will help the council meet the anticipated statutory carbon emission budget that will be allocated to large organisations in the UK under proposals in the final stages of the Climate Change Bill. This new legislation will commit the UK to an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS.**

26. None.

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