



## Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

### Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> September 2007

Subject: Climate Change

**Electoral Wards Affected:**

All

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council Function

Delegated Executive Function available for Call In

Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report

### Executive Summary

Climate Change is increasingly talked about at national and international levels, and as such more and more organisations and individuals are looking at what contribution they can make to combating the problem.

There are a number of ways to help tackle climate change at a local level, including increasing recycling and improving energy efficiency of public buildings and private dwellings. Some funding and assistance is available for both the public sector and individuals, which many may be unaware of.

The Area Committee is being asked to consider whether it wishes to support initiatives which will help to make the inner north west more energy efficient, thus reducing the area's contribution to climate change.

### 1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report was requested by the Chair of the Area Committee for the purpose of providing Members with information in relation to climate change, the Council's strategy towards this and potential action that the Area Committee could take to help tackle, at a local level, the problem.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 Climate change is a subject that is increasingly making national and international headlines. Once seen as a matter that could only be addressed by governments and large industry, the impact of individuals and localised areas is now under scrutiny.
- 2.2 Changes in behaviour of individuals in terms of such things as recycling, having an energy efficient home, car use and air travel are now seen as major factors in influencing the effects of climate change.

## **3.0 Council Strategy**

- 3.1 There is currently no statutory requirement for local authorities or local strategic partnerships to develop a strategic approach to climate change. However, the Vision for Leeds identified climate change as a strategic issue for the city. Therefore, Leeds City Council signed The Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in June 2006. This commits the City Council to:

- i) 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;
- ii) 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;
- iii) 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; and
- iv) Assess the risk associated with climate change and the implications for our services and our communities of climate change impacts and adapt accordingly.

- 3.2 Effort is now focusing on points 3.1ii) & 3.1iii). The Council has almost completed a draft action plan for its own operations, which should be finalised by the end of September 2007. The Leeds Initiative has also established a climate change sub-group (referred to as that Climate Change Strategy Group – CCSG) which is responsible for developing, consulting and publishing a city-wide strategy and action plan. This should be available for consultation in October 2007 and be published in May 2008.

## **4.0 Local Level Action**

Should it be interested in doing so there are a number of current and potential initiatives that the Area Committee could look to support which would help to reduce the negative contribution of the area to climate change.

## **4.1 Community Centres**

Many communities centres were built years ago when energy efficiency was not an issue of major consideration, as it is today. In the Inner North West Area Committee's portfolio there are presently four community centres, with a further three to be transferred in the near future. The energy efficiency of these buildings has not been evaluated but it would be fair to assume that the majority of them would have very poor ratings, due to single glazing windows, types of heating systems and low levels of insulation.

Each community centre would cost approximately £320 to audit, focus would be on identifying specific energy efficiency measures to install and identifying ways that energy can be managed better to reduce demand. For this to be successful, there would need to be a commitment to spend capital budget on cost-effective energy efficiency measures and a commitment to establish a simple structure to manage energy in each building. There are potential funding streams that would be available for this type of improvement work.

## **4.2 Schools**

Similar issues exist for schools as they do for Community Centres. The area has seen a couple of new build schools in recent years though and these should be more energy efficient than older ones. Schools are a bit harder to cost due to the variable size, but a typical secondary school would cost £1,400 and primary schools anything from £500 to £1,000. Again, there would need to be a commitment from Governors and teachers to action the results of the surveys.

Both schools and community buildings can access support from Microgeneration Yorkshire to install small-scale renewable energy technologies. However, these technologies are still expensive and effort should first be focussed on reducing energy demand through energy efficiency and management before moving onto renewables.

## **4.3 Low Energy Light Bulbs**

Neighbourhood Wardens have undertaken distribution of energy saving light bulbs in various locations, focusing on areas of deprivation such as Little London. The light bulbs are cheap to purchase and can easily be distributed through target areas.

One low energy light bulb can reduce lighting costs by up to £60 over the lifetime of the bulb (approximately 6 to 10 years). Traditional bulbs waste a lot of energy by turning it into heat rather than light. Low energy bulbs pass a current through gas in a tube, making the tube's coating glow brightly, resulting in less energy being used. If every household in the country installed three energy saving bulbs, enough energy would be saved to run the country's street lights for a year.

The Council already works with utility companies to promote the use of energy efficient light bulbs, linked to the Fuelsavers initiative. Bulbs are provided free of charge by the utilities and then distributed to households on the proviso that 70% of those given bulbs are on prescribed benefits, e.g. low income homes. The cost of a bulb to buy is approximately £3.

#### **4.4 Fuelsavers/Affordable Warmth**

A citywide Affordable Warmth Strategy has just been developed, largely based on one specifically for the North West of Leeds produced a number of years ago by the then North West Leeds PCT. This will be rolled out over the coming months, with key actions to be identified. In connection with this, Environmental Health are developing a scheme to promote fuelsaver grants, helping to tackle fuel poverty. The scheme is to be piloted in two wards, one being Hyde Park and Woodhouse, between October 2007 and March 2008. Work undertaken is still to be finalised but it is likely to involve an extensive door to door exercise, gathering information about the house and householder in order to assess if they are eligible for grants. It is also intended to use this as an opportunity to make referrals for smoke and fire checks and debt counseling.

#### **4.5 Waste Management**

##### **4.5.1 Home Composting**

A scheme is being run in conjunction with Recycle Now and WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) to promote home composting by offering reduced price composting bins. The scheme has been promoted through the About Leeds newsletter, but potentially more could be done in the inner north west to back this up.

##### **4.5.2 Real Nappies Incentive Scheme**

The Council is working in partnership with Nappies Direct, a Leeds based company, to promote the use of real nappies as an environmentally friendly alternative to disposable ones. The scheme offers parents of children under 12 months of age a free trial pack to see if real nappies would be a suitable alternative for them. It also offers a cash back incentive on purchases and use of a nappy laundry service. Again, there has been promotion of this scheme but more could be done within the inner north west should there be support and some additional funds available.

#### **5.0 Recommendations**

##### **5.1 The Area Committee is asked to:**

- a) note the contents of the report;
- b) decide whether it supports energy audits of community centres within its portfolio;
- c) decide if it work should be undertaken with school governors to try and make schools in the area more energy efficient;
- d) decide if it supports work to promote the home composting and real nappies schemes further in the inner north west; and
- e) provide further potential initiatives for investigation.