

Agenda Item 21e

Brighton & Hove City Council Scrutiny Panel on Climate Change Adaptation

Date : 1ST February

Subject : How is the Council through its Property Services preparing for Climate Change and in particular adaptation.

Report : Assistant Director, Property & Design

Our Climate is already changing and whatever we do to mitigate future effects of climate change by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions our emissions 30 years ago are affecting our climate. Along with increased temperatures and changes to weather patterns the UK will have to endure the issue of rising sea levels.

Rising to the challenge

To deal with the risks and understand the opportunities, the Council is :

- raising awareness of the potential impact of climate change so that all of us can begin to think about how we need to respond;
- prioritising decisions that have long-term effects, for example, investment in water, energy and communications infrastructure that will have a long life span;
- taking action early where the benefits clearly outweigh the costs. Some changes which can be made within the space of one or two years – such as supporting agriculture or providing shade in playgrounds need not be done now.

What are we doing to adapt to a changing climate

Buildings

Buildings will need to withstand more frequent extreme weather events from gale force wind and excessive rain to extreme heat. Buildings are designed to manage and reduce energy demands in winter for heating and summer for cooling. Air conditioning exacerbates climate change, unless powered by renewable sources. Designing new buildings or refurbishing old ones to make them climate resilient is more cost-effective than making changes later.

Property promotes sustainable designs for refurbishments and new build extensions.

For example sustainable designs for the Primary Capital Programme incorporate ground source heat pumps for space heating, photovoltaic and solar panels on the roof to heat hot water, rainwater harvesting, passive ventilation and sedum roofs. Projects containing these features - Longhill School, PeterGladwin, Balfour and Davigdor infants extensions.

Accommodation Strategy

Rationalisation of office accommodation through the promotion of new ways of working and technological solutions will enable a more flexible mobile work force and the reduction of our office buildings. This will enable sustainable staff travel plans and enable home working in times of adverse weather conditions like the recent weeks of snow. We can also lead by example in terms of water reduction and energy savings in our buildings and similar.

Communities

Ensure a fair deal for communities and in particular the vulnerable, by helping people now, as well as in the future;

For example, older people and children are more vulnerable to heatwaves, so heatwave plans include easy to follow advice that people can use to keep cool in their residents, have maintenance regimes in place with support advice for building managers and carers. Residential Homes ,Childrens Centres – Roundabout Children Centre.

Major Construction Sites

Adaptation Plans need to be produced in areas that will focus on the activities likely to be significantly affected by climate change and which will therefore require action such as major construction projects. Areas could also work on their plans for reducing greenhouse gases and will need to develop their adaptation plans alongside these. Property plays a leadership role in influencing strategic disposals and developments of sites through partnership working. Jubilee Library, Falmer Academy, New Brighton Centre.

Agriculture and the Natural Environment

Our agricultural estate has been reviewed to secure more sustainable management of the Downland surrounding our City. The Council's Downland Initiative strategy aims to "reconnect the people of Brighton & Hove to a more diverse Downland with better education, improved access and a better sense of connection to the land." We are working with our farmers to protect our natural environment and to support biodiversity and allow people to enjoy our countryside. For example improved access, set aside - enhanced habitats, grassland areas, high level entry schemes replacing Environmental Sensitive Areas.

Flooding

Advice to farmers on changes in farming practices to prevent flooding. Changes to farmers Agricultural Act Tenancies – eg Bevendean Farm to reflect the areas vulnerable to flooding and ensure that crop rotation and set aside regimes are in place. Ploughing advice and restrictions are in place and monitored.

City's Water Supply Protection

We are working in partnership with the Environment Agency, Southern Water and the South Down Joint Committee to protect the City's water supply.

