

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Agenda Item 99

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Adaptation to Climate Change
Date of Meeting: 10 March 2009
Report of: Acting Director of Strategy & Governance
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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove needs to develop its understanding and long term service planning in the face of local climate change.
- 1.2 There is a well-defined process from government for planning this work and the purpose of this report is to explain the role of Scrutiny in initiating that process locally.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 (1) An ad-hoc Scrutiny Panel be established to scope what work needs to be done to make good progress in planning for a changing local climate.
- 2.2 (2) That Panel will consider as one outcome whether or not a scrutiny Select Committee is required to ensure good progress in this work continues.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The city council and partners have focused their tackling climate change efforts on reducing carbon emissions. Signing the Nottingham Declaration, producing a Climate Change Action Plan, developing Carbon Management Programmes and expanding energy efficiency and sustainable energy measures across the city have all been a feature of this.
- 3.2 Work has is underway to plan for the impact of climate change, however further studies will need to be conducted before the council has a comprehensive approach. This has reflected the views of external stakeholders in the city who regarded cutting greenhouse gases as the priority. While Emergency Planning and Business Continuity services both have plans for extreme weather events such as heatwave and flooding, (and there is a Flood Group chaired by an experienced Assistant

Director) plans will need to be extended for full service delivery adaptation and resilience.

- 3.3 The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP 08) is very soon expected to issue the most comprehensive, scientifically-based climate modelling service in the world. This will allow users to freely explore online what climate impacts are predicted down to 25km squares, right across the UK, and the probability of them occurring in any given year ahead.
- 3.4 This will allow Brighton & Hove service providers to assess the risk of key impacts such as heatwave, drought, flooding, sea storm surges and sea level rise. e.g the likelihood of a fortnight of temperatures exceeding 35 degrees in the summer of 2015 is x%. If there are particular risks from this to service users e.g. elderly people in care homes, then service providers can assess the likelihood and the severity of the impact to produce a risk rating, and plan accordingly.
- 3.5 Some work on this will inevitably be underway e.g. in the Primary Care Trust, but more work is needed to develop a full picture and an all-encompassing process for planning ahead.
- 3.6 The city council and its key partners will be assessed for progress in Adaptation to Climate Change by the Environment Agency. This will be against new National Indicator 188 which is process-based, covering the following:
 - Assess the risks and opportunities comprehensively across the area;
 - Take action in any identified priority areas;
 - Develop an adaptation strategy and action plan setting out the risk assessment, where the priority areas are – where necessary in consultation & exhibiting leadership of local partners - what action is being taken to address these, and how risks will be continually assessed and monitored in the future; and
 - Implement, assess and monitor the actions on an ongoing basis.
- 3.7. Other areas of the South East such as Kent, Oxford and more recently east Sussex have made good progress against this and a panel would provide a good opportunity to learn lessons from them.
- 3.8 The City Council will be expected by the Environment Agency both to make steady progress through the stages of the NI 188 process over the next 3 years and to include a significant adaptation section in the revised Sustainable Community Strategy and the developing city Climate Change Strategy.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The council's Risk Manager, Business Continuity Manager, Emergency Planner, Flood Group chair (AD Sustainable Transport) and Environmental Health Manager are all being consulted.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Financial Implications:
To follow

Finance Officer Consulted:

Date:

- 5.2 Legal Implications

The review and scrutiny of matters relating to Central Services (which includes sustainability matters) fall to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission. As an overview and scrutiny committee, the Commission may appoint an ad hoc panel to carry out a short, sharply focused piece of scrutiny work. Rules regarding the operation of scrutiny panels are set out in Part 6.1, section 5, of the Council's constitution.

If the Panel does consider, under recommendation 2.2 above, that a scrutiny Select Committee is required, it is for the Commission to decide whether to appoint one. In doing so, the Commission must have regard to the factors set out in Part 6.1, section 4.2, of the Council's constitution.

Lawyer Consulted: Oliver Dixon

Date: 27 February 2009

- 5.3 Equalities Implications:

None anticipated

- 5.4 Sustainability Implications:

Adaptation to Climate Change is a very significant part of sustainability, though relatively recent as a strategic issue for local authorities.

- 5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

None anticipated. Public order and acquisitive crime offences do tend to increase in long, hot summers.

- 5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

There are risks of duplication of work, and that is why the recommendation is limited at this stage to a panel.

5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

There are very significant long-term future-proofing implications for the city from this work. Climate change adaptation and resilience is not a strong focus of city strategy yet and this needs to change.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents In Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

1. Details of the national indicator 188 on Adaptation to Climate Change are at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localgovindicators/ni188.htm>