

networkfareham Board Meeting Monday 1 June 2009

Item 6 Briefing Paper Developing the Sustainability agenda

INTRODUCTION

1. In recent months, Fareham Borough Council has been devoting attention to how it can progress the necessary actions to ensure the future sustainability of the Borough with particular reference to dealing with climate change. On 6 April, the Council's Executive considered a report on the issue and agreed to sign the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and to develop a Climate Change Strategy during 2009/10. Subsequently, a report was submitted to the Council's Service Performance and Improvement Policy Development and Review Panel on 28 May advising it of the actions which have been taken to date and what further steps are necessary. In addition, the Fareham Environment and Transport Partnership, at its meeting on 4 March, received a presentation on the key issues and actions and, as a result, the Partnership asked that a report be made to this Board.
2. The purpose of this report, therefore, is to give the Board a brief overview of the main issues, to seek views about how networkfareham's partners can contribute to the development of the sustainability agenda and, in particular, how the community can become involved. This latter point is vitally important as it is clear that taking action to maintain the quality of life of the current residents of Fareham without compromising it for future residents will require the involvement of the whole community and not just the Borough Council, its statutory partners and local businesses.

ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

3. Whatever actions are taken by the Government nationally or other agencies locally, there is no doubt that we are already beginning to feel the effects of climate change and that some impact is inevitable over the coming years. It is therefore vital that the Borough Council and its partners take steps to assess the risks that face the Borough and make sure that they are able to respond to these.
4. One of the Government's new set of National Indicators, NI 188, sets out five levels of preparation for adapting to climate change. These are:
 - Level 0: Getting started;
 - Level 1: Impact assessment;
 - Level 2: Comprehensive risk assessment;
 - Level 3: Comprehensive action plans; and
 - Level 4: Implementation, monitoring and review.
5. The 2008-11 Hampshire Local Area Agreement (LAA), relating to the Environment includes a commitment to reach Level 1 by March 2009, Level 2 by March 2010 and Level 3 by March 2011. At present Fareham, in common with other district councils in Hampshire, has completed the actions needed to

achieve level 0 and some, but not all, of the actions needed to achieve 1. One of these actions includes making a formal public commitment to identify and manage climate related risk. By agreeing to support the Nottingham Declaration and to develop a comprehensive climate change strategy, the Borough Council has fulfilled this particular element. However, to complete Level 1 and move on towards completion of Level 2, it now needs to identify significant risks and vulnerabilities, to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment for those vulnerabilities, to identify the priority actions necessary to deal with them and to ensure that partners within the Local Strategic Partnership are on board for any joint actions.

6. The various plans which are already in place to combat risk are currently being examined to ensure that they fully take climate change into account. Due to its geographical position, the biggest risks facing the Borough are those related to flooding, rising water levels and coastal erosion, although other risks will include more frequent extreme weather events and the possibility of the outbreak of diseases and illnesses not currently associated with our climate. In liaison with the Environment Agency, Hampshire County Council and neighbouring district councils, a series of flood risk and coastal management strategies are either underway or being planned for the entire coastline. It is anticipated that in June 2009, updated information will be available from the UK Climate Impacts Programme which will model future weather scenarios down to a local level on the basis of high, medium or low likelihoods. This will support a risk based assessment of the impacts and adaptations associated with a changing climate and inform the work of the Council and its partners in developing these strategies.

MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

7. Many of the actions necessary to reduce carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions are either beyond the control of the Council or over which it has limited influence. It is vital, therefore that **networkfareham** takes a lead in ensuring that action is taken to reduce emissions in the Borough and that the community as a whole are enthused and engaged so that they can play their part to the full. Three particular National Indicators are of relevance in this respect. Two of them, NIs 185 and 194, relate to the reduction of CO² and other greenhouse gas emissions from the Council's own operations. However, NI 186 relates to the per capita reduction of CO² emissions in Fareham as a whole.
8. The Hampshire LAA concentrates on NI 186 and includes an initial target to reduce CO² emissions by 10% by the end of the agreement in March 2011. It was anticipated that 7.1% of this reduction would come from the wider community as a result of actions initiated by the Government and the remainder from the activities of local authorities in Hampshire. For 2006 (the latest year for which figures were available), the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) estimated that the CO² emissions for Fareham were 6.76 tonnes per capita, roughly divided into one third each for domestic use, industrial and commercial use and transport.. The target to reduce this by 10% is now recognised to be unrealistic as many actions being planned will take many years to yield results. Although the target is not being formally rescinded, it is now being seen as a direction of travel, supported by some "quick wins",

which will have an impact by 2011 and a series of longer term strategic actions which will have an impact over the following 10 years. A workshop for Members and Officers in Hampshire is being planned to take place in late June with a view to identifying these more strategic actions.

9. Information on the Council's own emissions under NIs 185 and 194 have been collected for the first time for 2008/09 for submission in May 2009. The information gathered from this exercise will enable the Council to set a baseline and set targets for improvements from 2009/10 onwards. The Council has already started taking actions which will contribute to achieving energy reductions and is in the process of identifying further "quick wins".
10. It will now need to work in partnership with partner agencies, local businesses and residents to make further progress.

DEVELOPING A CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

11. This report earlier referred to the development of a comprehensive Climate Change Strategy which has been agreed by the Council's Executive. Within the Council, a Corporate Sustainability Group has been established. The Group is currently scoping the development of a Strategy which is likely to cover both adaptation and mitigation issues and other measures which may have a more indirect impact on climate change. The Strategy will be accompanied by an action plan which is intended to include both short and long term actions to be implemented by the Council and by its partners.
12. Initially, the timescale for this is to develop a draft strategy for consideration and comments by the Council's Service Performance and Improvement Panel in November 2009. Following a period of consultation with partners including consideration by the **networkfareham** board, approval would be sought by the Council's Executive by March 2010.

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY

13. It is clear that the Borough Council on its own has limited influence over what can be achieved. It can lead by example by taking the necessary actions to ensure that plans are in place to minimise the risks posed by climate change and to reduce its own energy consumption. It can also act in partnership with other agencies that are part of **networkfareham**, who all have an important part to play. However, ultimately, much will depend on enthusing and engaging the community as whole, as behavioural changes which reduce energy consumption and reduce car usage will be necessary. An environment will need to be created which will enable those changes to happen, without adopting a stance which appears to lecture people. Recent experience has shown that given the right environment, such changes can occur, for example high recycling rates in the Borough and the move away from using plastic bags in supermarkets.
14. There are a number of ways in which we could proceed. It is intended that recent initiatives, in particular the proposed development of a climate change strategy, are publicised through a series of articles in Fareham Today. These articles could be used as a platform to invite enthusiastic and committed residents to become involved and perhaps form a group which could act as a

sounding board for proposals stemming from the Council and its partners and as a catalyst for future action. Members of the group could also act as “champions” within their local areas. To some degree such groups already exist in other district council areas, examples being the Greening Campaign and Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC).

15. WinACC is a formally constituted group with a full time co-ordinator which aims to encourage all households, public, private and voluntary organisations to reduce their carbon footprints by a third by 2015. It is part funded by Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council and the University of Winchester. The Greening Campaign is a more informal campaign which originated in Petersfield and has now led to more than 100 Greening groups being set up in the south east. It joins individuals, groups and schools together with local authorities and other local organisations and concentrates on helping people to reduce their energy consumption within their local community. The initiative for such a move would need to come from the community, with suitable encouragement from **networkfareham**, and the latter approach may be more likely to succeed in Fareham than the former.
16. The views of the Board are invited as to whether they would wish to see such an approach adopted in Fareham, or if there any other ways in which community involvement could be developed.

NEXT STEPS

17. The following are the next steps being taken to progress matters further:
 - Workshop for officers and members from Hampshire County Council and Hampshire district councils to identify long term strategic aims for tackling climate change – June 2009
 - Workshop of Fareham Borough Council officers to include representatives from partner agencies to begin development of climate change strategy – July 2009
 - Article in Fareham Today to inform residents about what is happening and possibly invite further community involvement – September 2009
 - Agree how best to involve community following response to Fareham Today article – October 2009
 - Initial draft of climate change strategy complete – November 2009
 - **networkfareham** Board considers draft climate change strategy and progress on related sustainability issues and partners sign up to an action plan – December 2009
 - Council Executive consider final climate change strategy – March 2010