

lowcarboncities



State of Play audit – Local Authorities

To ascertain the current level of activity around carbon reduction and climate change across the sectors participating in the Low Carbon Cities Programme (LCCP) a series of telephone interviews were carried out with representatives from across NHS Trusts, local authorities and higher education institutions. This flier presents the results of the audit pertaining to the following local authorities:

- Bristol City Council
- Leeds City Council
- Birmingham City Council
- Sefton Council
- South Tyneside Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Barnsley Council
- Chesterfield Borough Council
- Sheffield City Council

Carbon Management matrix

The Carbon Trust's Carbon Management matrix was used to score the organisations based on their performance in the five areas defined in the table overleaf.

Three of the eleven local authorities have Environment Strategies, two have Climate Change Strategies and a further two have draft Climate Change Strategies. Four authorities have Carbon Management/Climate Change Action Plans. Seven of the documents have detailed action plans and two more are in progress. All are signed off at a corporate level.

Nine authorities have monitoring in place to track progress with their implementation plans.

Targets

Eight of the strategies contain CO₂ emissions reduction targets. These are listed as follows:

Category	Description	Rating out of 5
Policy	Whether the organisation has a climate change policy and action plan with targets, which is signed off and implemented.	3.6
Organisation	Whether climate change/ carbon management has political support from the highest level of the organisation and is the full time responsibility of an individual or integrated into the responsibilities of many individuals.	3.7
Information and data	Whether externally validated CO ₂ emissions data is collated for buildings, transport, etc for a baseline year and at regular intervals.	2.8
Communication and training	Whether there is a formalised communications and training plan for all staff on carbon and energy related matters.	3.0
Finance	Whether there are effective internal financing mechanisms for carbon/ energy saving projects and the extent to which external sources of funding are utilised.	3.5
Monitoring and evaluation	Whether there are regular reviews of carbon management processes by core teams and senior management.	3.6
Average		3.4

- 15% reduction by 2010 (2000 baseline). 11% reduction by end of 2007.
- 60% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2026.
- 60% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050 (2000 baseline): 15% reduction by 2010, 3% year-on-year reduction in council's own emissions from 2007.
- 12% to 2011/12 (2004/5 baseline): 2% per year.
- 5% reduction with planned aspirational target of 10% reduction.
- 2.56% reduction per annum (1990 baseline).
- 5 - 40% reduction in 5 years from April 1 2008 (2003/04 baseline).

Two further local authorities do not have direct targets but are responsible for delivering targets set by the local strategic partnerships. In total, seven of the documents and targets are linked to other internal or higher level targets.

Communication

Interviewees mentioned a variety of communication channels, the most popular being employee newsletters: five local authorities used this method. Three authorities each used emails and energy champions, and team briefings and intranet pages were also popular. Individual local authorities used radio, a staff survey, an internal workshop and the publication of the council's annual report to communicate low carbon messages.

Only one local authority stated that no training had been provided to staff on low carbon issues. Other authorities provided training to energy champions. Three authorities provide climate change induction training to all employees and a fourth authority is planning to do this in future. Two authorities mentioned external training courses: one from EST and another from Warm Front.

Monitoring

All eleven local authorities use and monitor the use of gas and electricity. Five authorities also use oil, two use oil and two LPG.

Eight authorities measure work related travel and a further two are planning to introduce monitoring in this area. Ten authorities monitor fleet emissions and eight monitor commuting practices, with seven using a staff survey for this.

With regard to monitoring community energy use, one local authority conducted an annual survey of 10,000 properties to assess energy efficiency measures that have been installed. The survey achieved a 20-30% response rate. Six other local authorities also mentioned participation in the HECA scheme. Further to this, one of these authorities uses the EST green barometer survey to monitor community energy use. Another local authority measures the SAP ratings of council properties and those of registered social landlords and uses Home Energy Advice Effectiveness Questionnaires to monitor whether people have implemented the energy saving advice provided by the council.

Projects - Internal

The local authority interviewees listed a variety of internal projects, especially in the building, awareness raising and renewables areas. A selection of these projects are listed below:

- A series of 50 detailed energy reports have been commissioned for a range of council buildings: they have set targets for each council owned property to improve the stock

significantly by 2010, aiming to raise the SAP rating from 35 to 65.

- Currently working to comply with Carbon Trust recommendations to heat all offices to 19degrees. Also looking at reducing office opening hours to reduce heating and lighting and at amending procedures used by caretakers for closing down buildings.
- Looking at insulation, voltage optimisation, lighting, etc through LEAF scheme.
- A number of PFI schools have been planned/built with improved energy performance written into the specification.
- Replaced main gym lighting controls with a new style of lighting to reduce load from 28KW to 11kW (1000 to 500 Lux).
- Installed two CHP units: civic complex and a high rise housing development.
- Installation of biomass boilers in council owned houses and in at least a handful of schools. Also some school wind turbines.
- PV and wind turbines for schools to help reduce energy bills and to be used as educational tools.
- Have PV panels on sports centre - try to install renewables on new builds so a new office development has GSHPs.
- Conducted EST green fleet review and have travel plans for Council buildings.
- Adopted Code of Practice on Sustainable Procurement and developing Sustainable Procurement Strategy.
- Received numerous national awards for biomass heating project.
- The council is trailing some solar, thermal and wind energy equipment in the city.
- Have increased recycling and composting rates 7-fold over 7 yrs.

Further to these examples, one council is looking at a variation of the Merton rule. Rather than merely specifying that new buildings should utilise 10% renewables, the local authority is working to ensure that money is not being diverted away from other energy efficiency measures, such as increased insulation, in order to achieve this target.

Another local authority is working on a CHP district heating scheme, which has three phases and demonstrates the benefits of the three main LCCP sectors working together towards a common low carbon goal: phase 1 is in the city centre, phase 2 is in the city hospital and phase 3 is at the university.

Projects - External

Awareness raising projects were the most popular for engaging with members of the public. Some of these initiatives are listed as follows:

- The council runs a pledge scheme for individuals to reduce their personal carbon footprint.
- Greencheck schools project: working to reduce school environmental impact by involving the kids in the council environmental management system, e.g. through energy audits and action planning.
- General awareness raising with communities through Local Action 21 to minimise impact, e.g. footprinting to highlight future project areas.
- Council employees give presentations on climate change, information sharing and projects they are working on to members of the local environment forum. The next meeting will focus on sustainable construction and amending the Community

Strategy to bring climate change higher up the agenda.

- The local authority has held a number of events, e.g. for World Environment Day, environment forums and sustainability roadshows in local shopping malls, where they hand out leaflets and low energy light bulbs and talk to people about what they can do to be more energy efficient.

Other external projects include a district-heating scheme servicing 350 homes. Most of these homes are council owned, however some have been purchased and have remained part of the scheme. Another local authority is working in partnership with a local utility company to provide discounted insulation to householders.

Unsuccessful or rejected projects

Availability of finance and long paybacks periods are listed as reasons for many projects being rejected or performing below expectations. For example, one local authority was looking at double-glazing for its town hall but the building is as much glass as walls so the project was rejected due to cost. Another authority had successfully installed a PV array at an athletics stadium and planned to install a similar array within the city centre. No finances or resources were available at the time, so project was never started. A third council planned to look at a range of small scale renewable for office buildings or in social housing, however payback periods were too long.

Another problem encountered is low response rates from householders. For example, one local authority offered support to improve insulation within solid wall properties, however this was seen as a low priority by the tenants so take-up

was low. A second local authority wanted to send letters to the 44,000 private rented properties within the local authority area to inform the tenants about ways to improve the SAP ratings of the properties. However, the landlords refused this direct mail method, opting to disseminate the information to their tenants. Of the 44,000 properties, the council received 23 returns.

A further example provided by one of the local authorities demonstrates the need for communication across council departments. A breakdown in this communication led to the authority fitting new energy efficient lighting within a building that has since been demolished.

Projects - Planned

Projects planned by the local authorities include:

- About to trial 3 electric smart cars in the city.
- One councillor is looking at a hydro system - community owned initiative.
- Looking at CHP within leisure centre.
- Working with local leisure centre to put in place an energy strategy and direct funds from the maintenance budget into energy measures.
- Building a new wing of the civic complex, which will be BREEAM excellent.
- A new community warmth project.

Partnerships

The interviewees were asked whether they worked in partnership with any other organisations with regard to climate change initiatives. The local authority interviewees listed the following organisations:

- BAA
- Biodiversity forum
- Bristol Partnership – Green Capital Initiative
- CREATE Centre
- Environment Agency
- Fuel suppliers
- Future Energy Yorkshire
- Green Commuter Club
- Local environment forums
- Local Strategic Partnership
- NHS Primary Care Trusts
- Other local authorities
- Passenger Transport Executive
- Police
- Recycling Action Yorkshire
- Universities
- Yorkshire and Humber Assembly
- Yorkshire and Humber Regional Forum
- Yorkshire Environmental Group
- Yorkshire Forward

Barriers to working in partnership

One local authority could not see a negative side to working in partnership with others, stating: "Partnership is a way to bring in investment and expertise." Another interviewee highlighted staff not having time to set up partnerships as a barrier and two others identified timescales and resource levels not matching between organisations as a problem. One of these interviewees suggested inserting a penalty clause within partnership agreements to prevent partners dragging their heels.