

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
23RD APRIL 2009

Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009/10

OPEN	
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	A Better Environment for Today and Tomorrow
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	A Sustainable Environment
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Anne Hingley
DIRECTOR:	Director of Planning & Regulatory Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Jenny Moreton, Principal Health and Sustainability Officer
APPENDICES	Appendix 1 Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009/10 <i>The appendix to this report has been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (See front cover for details).</i>

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the adoption of the Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and 2009/10 Action Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that:

- 2.1 **The Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and 2009/10 Action Plan are adopted.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 15th October 2008, the Regeneration and Enterprise Committee recommended to Cabinet that a Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy be developed. This recommendation was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 20th November 2008.
- 3.2 The Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy replaces the previous Sustainability and Affordable Warmth strategies and incorporates -and builds upon- the issues addressed within them.
- 3.3 The Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy has been written to align with the Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy, setting the direction for delivering the county strategy within the district. The Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy has recently been reviewed and updated.

3.4 In February 2009, approximately 40 Wyre Forest stakeholders attended a seminar on climate change. Many of the issues raised have been incorporated into this strategy.

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Earth’s climate is changing. The most recent Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) leaves us in no doubt that human activity is the primary driver of the observed changes. Earth has warmed by 0.74°C over the last century; around 0.4°C of this warming has occurred since the 1970s. Mean global temperatures are likely to rise between 1.1 and 6.4°C above 1990 levels by the end of this century, depending on our emissions. This will result in a further rise in global sea levels of between 20 and 60cm by the end of this century, continued melting of ice caps, glaciers and sea ice, changes in rainfall patterns and intensification of tropical cyclones.

4.2 A study into the impacts of climate change in Worcestershire, commissioned by the Worcestershire Partnership, revealed that the county’s climate has also changed over the last century. For example, Worcestershire’s annual temperature has risen by 0.6°C since the 1900s and we have seen an increased intensity of rainfall events. The county’s climate is expected to carry on changing, with continuing changes in our temperature and rainfall patterns and increased frequency of short duration extreme weather events, such as storms and floods, predicted. As an example, the 2007 floods cost Worcestershire over £150 million, with many Wyre Forest households and businesses affected. Whilst a single such event cannot be attributed to climate change, the frequency of flooding events is expected to increase.

4.3 The extremity of further climate change, locally and globally, is likely to depend on future levels of emissions of climate change gases. The more we do now to reduce emissions, the less extreme the expected impact. The main human influence on global climate is emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO₂). DEFRA provide data on CO₂ emissions for each Local Authority area. In the Wyre Forest district, CO₂ emissions are split as follows:

Sector	CO2 emissions (2005) (tonnes per year/ % of total)	Main sources of emissions
Domestic	239,000 tonnes 39%	Electricity, gas and other fuels used to heat & power Wyre Forest’s housing stock.
Industry & Commerce	218,000 tonnes 36%	Electricity, gas and other fuels used to heat & power Wyre Forest’s business and public service providers.
Transport	150,000 tonnes 25%	Petrol and diesel used by transport on the roads and railways of the Wyre Forest.

Source: DEFRA

4.4 The 2008-11 Worcestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA) includes a number of targets to tackle climate change issues. The Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy has been reviewed and updated to take these into account. The Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy sets out how this work will be taken forward within the district.

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4.5 The Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy has been closely aligned with the Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy. It has three overarching aims:

- Raising awareness about the issue of climate change
 - Reducing Climate Change Gas Emissions in the Wyre Forest district
 - Plan and adapt to the impacts of climate change
- Each of these aims is split into key themes in order to address the issue in different sectors.

4.6 The Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy covers the period 2009-11, to coincide with the Local Area Agreement and Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy. A 2009/10 Wyre Forest Climate Change Action Plan has also been developed, setting out actions to deliver the strategy over the forthcoming year.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The 2009/10 Action Plan proposals can be contained within existing budgets.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Worcestershire Local Area Agreement includes various targets to tackle climate change. Details are provided within the Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy.

6.2 The Wyre Forest Sustainable Community Strategy includes a priority to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

6.3 The UK Climate Change Act passed into law in November 2008. This includes government targets to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050, to be met through a series of 5 year carbon budgets. This may well have further implications for local government.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Failure to implement measures to tackle climate change could have many negative implications for the council and Wyre Forest residents, including failure to meet the requirements of the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy sets out a framework for delivering work to tackle climate change within the district. The 2009/10 Action Plan sets out details of actions to be carried out in the forthcoming year.

9. CONSULTEES

9.1 Environmental Working Group

9.2 Wyre Forest Affordable Warmth Group

9.3 Various stakeholders from within WFDC and from partner organisations, including those who attended the Wyre Forest Climate Change Seminar.

9.4 Wyre Forest Matters

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy www.worcestershire.gov.uk/climatechange