



Regeneration and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee

Briefing Paper

Report of: Jenny Moreton (Principal Health and Sustainability Officer)

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Open Report

Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009/10

1. Summary

This briefing paper outlines proposals in relation to the adoption of a Climate Change Strategy for Wyre Forest and 2009/10 Action Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 15th October 2008, the Regeneration and Enterprise Committee recommended that a Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy be developed. This recommendation was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 20th November 2008.
- 2.2 The Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy replaces the previous Sustainability and Affordable Warmth strategies and incorporates -and builds upon- the issues addressed within them.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.

3. Tackling Climate Change in Wyre Forest

- 3.1 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. The 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.

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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.

4. Options

4.1 The Committee may wish to:

- i) Recommend to Cabinet that the Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and 2009/10 Action Plan be adopted.
- ii) Put forward alternative or additional proposals to the Cabinet.

5. Appendices

5.1 Appendix A - Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009/10.

6. Background Papers

6.1 [Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy](#)

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