

Action Plans and Strategies – Case Study

Beacon Theme	Sustainable Energy
Authority Name	Woking Borough Council
Case Study Title	Action plans and strategies – Climate Change Strategy

Overview of service delivery

Woking Borough Council is a strong believer that the action plans and strategies it has in place to tackle climate change can bring about real change in the form of reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change. The Council wants to ensure that the next generation do not have to pay the bills left behind by their parents, and is taking action to tackle climate change.

Woking's aim is not only to meet objectives set for them by others, but also to exceed the best international standards. The Council adopted its Climate Change Strategy in 2002 and is believed to be one of the first UK authorities to have adopted a comprehensive climate change strategy on a scale that is likely to meet the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution targets of 60 per cent reductions of CO₂ equivalent emissions by 2050 and 80 per cent by 2100.

In addition to its climate change strategy, Woking's climate neutral development good practice guidance is believed to be the first of its kind in the UK and promotes voluntary co-operation between parties involved in the local development process with a view to achieving an 80 per cent reduction on CO₂ equivalent emissions and mitigating against climate change.

Objectives

Woking's climate change strategy, has three overarching aims:

- to reduce CO₂ emissions
- to adapt to climate change
- to promote sustainable development

By encompassing a wide range of different objectives spanning the breadth of services and activities undertaken by the Council, the Strategy ensures the objectives for responding to climate change are embraced across the Council. Although its context is long-term, the Strategy includes targets and actions to be achieved in both the short and the medium term. It aims to be a flexible document, and is reviewed annually.

Methodology

Woking's climate change strategy builds on the Council's environmental successes and takes a carbon neutral approach to the future of services and activities within the borough. The strategy sets out a range of options which aim to reduce CO₂ equivalent emissions and take further measures to enable the habitats within Woking to adapt to climate change.

Eight key areas form chapters in the climate change strategy:

- planning and regulation
- energy services
- waste
- transport
- procurement
- education and promotion
- management of natural habitats
- adapting to climate change.

The strategy covers the whole spectrum of the borough's energy uses and climate change emissions – power, heat, water, waste disposal and transport.

The initial climate change strategy, adopted in 2002, was updated and reprinted in June 2005 to include progress against the actions. This is important to ensure the Council is on target to meet its goals.

One of the priority areas for action in Woking's climate change strategy is ensure new development does not contribute to climate change and is built to a standard that is resilient to future changes in our climate - in other words, development that is climate neutral. This links with another document that the Council has developed: a series of good practice guidance notes that explain some of the main ideas behind climate neutral development.

These are under the following headings:

- location and transport
- site layout and building design
- energy
- sustainable drainage systems
- water conservation and recycling

In addition there is a summary leaflet and a checklist available to be completed when submitting a planning application, stating which climate neutral measures are to be adopted as part of a new development.

Outcomes

The climate change strategy has proved to be a useful tool to provide an encompassing approach to tackle mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change.

Positive learning points

- strategies must include a wide range of different objectives spanning the breadth of services and activities undertaken by a Council.
- strategy must be embraced across the Council.
- the strategy must contain a financial business plan with accurate calculation of risk and return
- the strategy must contain a contextual political plan with a calculation of risk and return
- the implementation plan must be long-term.
- the Strategy must include targets and actions to be achieved in both the short and the medium term.
- it must be a flexible document and reviewed annually.

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