

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
5 JUNE 2014

THE CARBON REDUCTION STRATEGY FOR LEICESTERSHIRE 2014-2020 AND
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2014-2017

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which provided a summary of the Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan and sought the Committee's comments prior to the Plan being submitted to the Cabinet in July. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

The Committee welcomed to the meeting Mrs. P. Posnett CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Environmental Matters. Mrs Posnett advised the Committee that the Carbon Reduction Strategy outlined proposed work for Leicestershire as a geographical area, not just for the County Council. She gave thanks to officers for developing the Strategy.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i) It was expected that the County Council as an Authority would meet its 2020 carbon reduction target with the completion of the Re FIT programme. In the wider context the Council would attempt to understand how well the County as a whole, was performing against its carbon reduction targets. It was explained that whilst there was no legal requirement for the County Council to meet the targets laid out in the Strategy there were reputational risks if these were not met. The Strategy would also be helpful in bidding for external funding to deliver carbon reduction initiatives;
- (ii) It was explained that the Department of Energy and Climate Change had first published data on greenhouse gases by local authority area in 2005, and this was selected as the first year for carbon reduction targets by the County Council. Currently the Council was marginally ahead of reaching its carbon reduction target for 2020;
- (iii) The Committee was advised that one of the priorities identified through the Carbon Reduction Strategy Implementation Plan was fuel poverty. Previously, the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), a government led energy scheme funded by energy suppliers, had been aimed at tackling this

issue, but with limited success. The '4 Ways 2 Warmth' project, led by the Adults and Communities Department in partnership with a wide range of public and third sector organisations and funded by the Department of Health had identified and supported vulnerable people in fuel poverty over the past two years. Ways to follow up this work were being considered.

- (iv) In relation to reducing carbon emissions from transport, it was anticipated that advances in vehicle fuel efficiency technology would compensate for the predicted increase in car usage up to 2020. It was not until the period 2021 to 2031 that carbon emissions from transport was projected to increase. It was explained that the County Council's role in affecting the take up of demand for more environmentally friendly vehicles was limited. The County Council would look at the possibility of hybrid cars as fleet vehicles where these were economically viable over the whole life of the vehicle. Currently hybrid vehicles were expensive to purchase and maintain, relative to that of standard cars;
- (v) The Carbon Reduction Strategy made no reference to rail developments, including the viability of the National Forrest Line, as it would not be possible to deliver a rail project within the lifespan of the Strategy up to 2020. Consideration of rail related projects would better fit within future updates to the LTP3 Long Term Strategy (2011-2026);
- (vi) The Committee queried the effect of the increased use of speed cushions on carbon emissions from transport. It was explained that where traffic calming measures were introduced this was done alongside other measures to reduce car usage and encourage walking and cycling and so that the impact was mostly positive or at least carbon neutral;
- (vii) The Committee was advised that any potential funding for the training of local domestic heat engineers in order to help deliver energy efficiency in businesses and homes was a matter for the Department of Energy and Climate Change rather than the County Council.

RESOLVED:

That the comments now made in respect of the Carbon Reduction Strategy for Leicestershire 2014 – 2020 and Implementation Plan 2014 - 2017 be drawn to the attention of the Cabinet at its meeting of 15 July 2014.