Environment Board

17 March 2010

Item 3

Local Carbon Frameworks

Summary

This report updates members of the Environment Board on the development of Local Carbon Budgets, now termed 'Local Carbon Frameworks', building on the report and recommendations from the November 2009 paper. Accompanying the paper will be a presentation from Bristol City Council.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

Raise any on-going concerns, questions or thoughts to inform the development of the pilot local carbon framework areas

Actions

Officers to take forward as appropriate

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Local Carbon Frameworks

Background

1. In the consultation 'Strengthening Local Democracy', Communities and Local Government (CLG) consulted on a proposal for local authorities adopt 'local carbon budgets'. The LGA responded to this consultation which closed on 2nd October 2009.

2. A paper was brought to the Environment Board November 2009 meeting outlining how local carbon budgets were developing. This paper is to keep members informed of on-going development in local carbon budgets.

3. Local carbon budgets have now been renamed as 'local carbon frameworks'. A Task Force on local carbon frameworks was set up with CLG, and the LGA have been active participants. At the LGA's annual Climate Change Conference in Liverpool in January, John Denham MP announced eight pilot local carbon frameworks. These pilots will spend the financial year 2010-2011 experimenting with local carbon frameworks. The pilot areas are:

    *   Bristol City Council
    *   Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Multi Area Agreement
    *   Leeds City Region
    *   Manchester City Region
    *   Northumberland County Council
    *   London Borough of Haringey
    *   Nottingham City Council
    *   Oxford City Council

4. The Government's recently announced 'Household Energy Management Strategy' also made reference to local carbon frameworks. The implications are discussed in section five.

More clarity on the scope of local carbon frameworks
5. A particular issue raised by members at the November Environment Board was the scope of emissions included in the local carbon frameworks. CLG has responded by stating that the concept behind the frameworks is that they should cover only those emissions which the local authority can either control or could have influence over. The frameworks will need to establish a quantifiable reduction of carbon emissions over a period of time, along with a trajectory for achieving that target, with a complimentary delivery plan. This should be based on local evidence and include community engagement.

Next steps for the pilot areas

6. All the pilot areas took part in a short one-day event to familiarise themselves with their role as pilots. This will be followed, in April, by a two-day intensive workshop to identify how the pilots can unpack the limitations and barriers local authorities experience in delivering energy efficiency, clean energy, and carbon reductions effectively and efficiently at a local level. Each pilot area will explore a particular element of a local carbon framework. These are likely to include:

- Data gathering and analysis
- Robustly assessing performance
- Developing ways to forecast reductions in emissions from various policy interventions
- Developing partnerships
- Running a 'change management process' to embed issues around carbon reduction and energy within the council
- Identifying the institutional changes needed to reduce carbon emissions locally
- Linking to 'total place' by analysing how and where resources are spent by which organisations to reduce carbon emissions locally
- Looking at how procurement can reduce carbon emissions
- Evaluating the range of funding sources available
- Action planning
- How and where local authorities need assistance
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Dissemination of the learning process.

7. By looking at these elements in detail, the local authorities will be making the case for additional support, resourcing, freedoms and flexibilities to allow them to get on with the job of improving energy efficiency, rolling out clean energy technologies and reducing carbon locally.

Supporting arrangements

8. CLG is bringing together a group of experts in quantifying and reducing carbon emissions, which the pilot authorities can draw on to assist them in their projects. Additional mechanisms will also be put in place so the authorities can learn and support each other. This will include a Communities of Practice site on the IDeA website.

LGA involvement

9. The LGA has been active members of the local carbon framework task group, and has been a part of the workshops with the pilot groups. It is anticipated that the close involvement of the LGA will continue in the project.

Household Energy Management Strategy

10. The Government's recent announcement of the Household Energy Management Strategy presents new mechanisms for local authorities to lever in

funding to improve the energy efficiency of their social and private housing stock. This is primarily by obliging energy suppliers to consult and partner with local authorities who have set up a local carbon framework. The incentive here is that local authorities who have developed a local carbon framework will have influence over how resources to improve energy efficiency will be spent in their areas. The pilots will help inform what a local carbon framework looks like, and what arrangements are needed with energy companies to ensure effective local partnership arrangements.

Implications for Wales

11.   Wales is included in the Household Energy Management Strategy, and as such the mechanism for partnering energy companies with local authorities through local carbon frameworks will apply in Wales.

Financial Implications

12.   The Group's work on Local Carbon frameworks can be taken forward within the current business plan. CLG are providing £3 million funding for the pilots.

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