

## Nottingham Declaration Partnership – Next Steps

### Summary

1. The attached paper outlines the future work of the Nottingham Declaration Partnership (NDP)
2. Advice is sought from members on how the NDP should deal with the issue of improvement within the sector
3. Members are also asked to consider opportunities to support the work of the NDP

### Action

4. Officers to take forward Member's considerations

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## Nottingham Declaration Partnership – Next Steps

### Introduction:

1. The Nottingham Declaration is a commitment by local authorities – signed by the council leader[s] - in England to ‘develop plans with our partners and local communities to progressively address the causes and impacts of climate change, according to our local priorities, securing maximum benefit for our communities.’
2. The Declaration was established in 2002, in the absence of a reporting framework or strong national leadership on climate change to encourage councils to recognise climate change and start to act.
3. The Declaration is underpinned by the Nottingham Declaration Partnership (NDP)- key organisations that support local authority action on climate change.<sup>1</sup> While the partner organisations support local authorities through their own programmes, by working together we aim to add value by offering a focal point for action by councils and a "one-stop-shop" for guidance and support across all aspects of climate change.
4. The NDP has proactively campaigned to increase the number of signatories to the Declaration or its equivalent to as near 100% as possible.
5. At the end of April 2009, all Scottish and Welsh Councils have signed their equivalent of the Declaration. 350 out of 380 English councils have signed.
6. Until the Local Government Bill proposals in late 2006, there was no national driver to ensure climate change was addressed at the highest levels in local authorities. The Declaration has clearly been attractive to local authorities as a way of making a high profile public statement of their commitment to address climate change.
7. It is apparent that the NDP now needs to move beyond the signatory ‘commitment’ phase to a new ‘action’ or ‘delivery’ phase. This should support and deliver actual improvement in performance on a consistent basis and offer challenge or build peer pressure where needed.

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<sup>1</sup> Carbon Trust, Energy Saving Trust, ICLEI, IDeA, Local Government Association, Nottingham City Council, The Environment Agency and UK Climate Impacts Programme

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## Next Steps:

8. In recognition of the changing local government landscape, at a recent Business Planning session, the NDP revised its 2009/10 vision and strategy. The next phase of partnership activity will therefore show a more visible and demonstrable willingness to engage with the issue of challenge and improvement within the sector. The NDP will in turn provide an enabling framework for self-challenge, self-improvement and peer support for the sector
9. In terms of high level objectives, partners specifically agreed to:
  - i. Communicate on a more targeted and visible basis.
  - ii. Wind down the signatory phase of partnership activity and change the emphasis from encouraging councils to sign up to action.
  - iii. Make a judgement to identify and engage with those councils who have signed the Declaration but have taken insufficient action to actually address climate change.
10. In terms of key action, partners specifically agreed by the end of July 2009 to have:
  - i. Shared intelligence about the take up each partners support programmes by individual councils,
  - ii. finalised a new climate change benchmark for which will require authorities to self assess their progress and signpost them towards incremental improvements. The new climate change benchmark will replace the IDeA's sustainable energy benchmark and the intention is that it will be compatible with other partners' tools<sup>2</sup> but not duplicate them.
  - iii. written targeted and factual letters to all Council Leaders and Chief Executives recognising their efforts so far and how members of the partnership can help them progress.
11. The targeted and factual letter is a key and more immediate action for the NDP which:
  - i. Recognises the massive commitment shown by LAs to addressing climate change
  - ii. Signals the shift of emphasis in partnership activity,
  - iii. Sets out how the Nottingham Declaration partners will help the sector step up a gear in taking on the climate change challenge.
  - iv. Inspires leadership by being co-signed by the Chairman of the Environment Board.

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<sup>2</sup> The new climate change benchmark will replace the IDeA's sustainable energy benchmark and the intention is that it will be compatible with other partners' tools such as the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management Programme, EST's 1 to 1, UKCIP Local Regional Adaptation Partnership NI 188 guidance

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12. The NDP have also requested that the LGA Environment Board support this process to show endorsement.

## **For Discussion:**

13. Views are sought on the NDP's revised approach and initial timescales.

14. It is apparent that some councils have taken little or no action to tackle climate since signing the Declaration – though making this judgement needs to be done carefully. The partnership is considering addressing this either removing those councils from the list of signatories or inviting them to recommit. Views are sought on both of these options.

15. The NDP would also welcome the environment board support for the letter and in devising and disseminating a system for peer support and challenge. It would also be helpful for the environment board to signal how forcefully to word this challenge.

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