

**CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY AND ACTION PLAN**  
**WDA/53/08**

**Recommendations**

That:

1. Members approve a Climate Change Policy and action plan and;
2. Members agree to the Authority in exercising its functions to have regard to regional and sub-regional climate change action plans.

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**CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY AND ACTION PLAN**  
**WDA/53/08**

**Report of the Director**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 to seek the Authority's approval of a Climate Change policy;
- 1.2 to seek the Authority's approval to implement a climate change action plan; and
- 1.3 To seek Members agreement to the Authority in exercising its functions to have regard to regional and sub-regional climate change action plans.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Climate change is the most challenging issue facing society today. In response, many governments are taking steps to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions through international protocols, regulations, standards and policies, including the introduction of Emission Trading, Cap and Trade Programmes and carbon and energy taxes.
- 2.2 The UK is committed to a legally binding target of 12.5 per cent by 2012 (Kyoto Protocol). Furthermore, a legally binding target of 26% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2020 and 60% by 2050 have been proposed in the Climate Change Bill.
- 2.3 Organisations such as the Authority must be able to understand their GHG risks if we are to contribute to national, regional and sub-regional short-term reduction targets and be prepared for future national and regional climate change policies and regulations in the medium to long-term.
- 2.4 Collectively, if we carry on with a 'business as usual' attitude then the stock of GHG in the atmosphere will increase significantly with potentially dangerous impacts on people and the built and natural environment.
- 2.5 The Authority has approved a number of sustainability policies, the completion of a Headline Sustainability Strategy and workstreams for sustainable development, climate change, sustainable procurement,

corporate social responsibility and environmental management (WDA/13/07), which advocate actions to address climate.

- 2.6 Recent modelling of the Authority's Waste Strategy highlighted it could contribute to a significant reduction in GHG emissions through delivering its statutory functions.(WDA/28/08)

### **3. Climate Change - UK**

- 3.1 There is currently no legislation, regulation or standards imposed in the UK in terms of GHG reductions. However, this situation is about to change in the near future when it is anticipated that the Government's Climate Change Bill will be transposed into law (2008/09).
- 3.2 At present, Government supports the voluntary signing of the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change for those Authorities that wish to address climate change issues and to date, 330 Local Authorities have signed up to the declaration including all members of the Merseyside Waste Partnership.
- 3.3 The Government has recently introduced a mandatory Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Emissions Trading Scheme (similar to the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme) for organisations that use more than 6,000 Megawatts of electricity per annum in 2010. Most urban local authorities are likely to be included in the scheme and Liverpool MBC and Halton BC have volunteered to trial the scheme from 2008.
- 3.4 An objective of the proposed climate change action plan is for the Authority to sign the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change. Signing the declaration will give the Authority access to the Carbon Trust's support programme to implement a Carbon Management Plan.

### **4. Climate Change – North West**

- 4.1 The objectives of North West Climate Change Action Plan (2007/09) are to influence attitudes and behaviour in order to increase energy efficiency, reduce energy demand and promote low-carbon technologies and importantly, to adapt to climate change.
- 4.2 4NW (formally the North West Regional Assembly), in their Guide to the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Proposed Carbon Reduction

Targets (2007) propose that the North West, as a whole and the sub-regions individually, reduce their carbon dioxide emission by 30% from 1990 levels by 2020. This exceeds the Climate Change Bill target of 26%.

- 4.3 The Authority has no statutory obligations to have regard to regional climate change Action plans. However as the second largest waste disposal Authority in the North West the Authority could demonstrate a significant contribution to this plan if it gave regard to its priorities in the delivery of its statutory functions.

## **5. Climate Change – Merseyside**

- 5.1 The Authority has a statutory duty under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 in exercising its functions to have regard to every local improvement target specified in local agreements which relate to it.
- 5.2 To this end the Director and MWDA staff are working with Merseyside Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in the region on the development of their climate change action plans and with the Liverpool City Region through the Mersey Partnership on the development of a sub-regional climate change action plan.
- 5.3 The new National Indicators (total - 198) on which all Local Authorities must report, replace all other existing sets of indicators including Best Value Performance Indicators and Performance Assessment Framework indicators.
- 5.4 There are 3 indicators specifically related to climate change within the set of national indicators (see below);
  - 185: CO<sub>2</sub> reductions from emissions from local authority operations;
  - 186: Per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in LA area; and
  - 188: Planning to adapt to climate change.
- 5.5 As part of their core Local Area Agreement indicators (with associated improvement targets for the next three years), Districts have selected the following climate change indicators;

- Halton MBC 186
- Knowsley MBC 186
- Liverpool CC 188
- Sefton MBC 188
- St Helens MBC 185
- Wirral MBC 186

5.6 As part of our basket of sustainable development indicators the Authority has chosen indicators 185 and 188.

## **6. MWDA**

- 6.1 The Authority has established an in-house Sustainability Steering Group, which is chaired by an Assistant Director. The Steering Group will manage and monitor progress on the Headline Sustainability strategy and a suite of sustainability indicators which will be reported to the Senior Management Team.
- 6.2 In May 2008, the Authority established an Environmental Management System (EMS) for its office base and 7 Closed Landfill sites. The EMS conforms to the guidelines for environmental management of the International Standards Organisation (ISO 14001:2004). The process towards accreditation for the standard (external verification) will begin in early October 2008.
- 6.3 The EMS is closely linked to the Authority's climate change action plan. Findings from the EMS Significant Environmental Impacts study will be incorporated into a Carbon Management Plan and cross-referenced to the EMS.
- 6.4 From the outset, sustainable procurement has been the driver of sustainability because of the importance of the new waste management contracts. In order to ensure that climate change was also fully addressed, references to climate change issues were included in the contract specifications and during competitive dialogue with participants.

- 6.5 Within the procurement process, we expect participants to make statements in relation to carbon management, performance, review and reporting.
- 6.6 We have established through modelling the Waste Strategy that the Authority has a critical role to play in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> and in influencing others to significantly reduce their GHG emissions from waste management activities.
- 6.7 In addition, we will investigate the carbon footprints of suppliers, products and services and the Life Cycles of products and their Whole Life Costs will be also be analysed (WDA/46/08).
- 6.8 In order to limit the environmental impact and improve the performance of new facilities and those earmarked for refurbishment the Authority aims to meet Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Excellent standard and the Very Good standard for refurbishments (WDA/46/08).
- 6.9 For National Indicator 185 (CO<sub>2</sub> reductions from emissions from local authority operations), baseline information and data is being collected for Senior Management and Authority reporting purposes.
- 6.10 The selection of National Indicator 188 (Adapting to Climate Change), involves 5 levels of attainment. At present, the actions within each of the levels and other actions that have been researched are being developed into a comprehensive Climate Change Framework for Authority use.
- 6.11 The Authority is in the process of completing a business continuity plan for dissemination to Districts. The plan will contain the outcome from a flood risk assessment (a causal climate change impact), which was completed on all MWDA current waste management facilities.

## **7. Key Climate Change Priorities**

- 7.1 Within the climate change action plan there are 5 key priorities as follows;
  - Make a commitment to address climate change issues in Merseyside;

- Raise awareness and understanding about climate change amongst Members, staff and the wider community of Merseyside;
- Consider the climate change issues (reduction of emissions and potential positive and negative impacts) in the development and review of relevant Authority strategies, plans, policies, activities and contracts;
- Reduce the emission of greenhouse gases associated with all Authority activities; and
- Encourage other organisations to take action to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

## 8. Risk Implications

Identified Risk	Likelihood Rating	Consequence Rating	Risk Value	Mitigation
Failure to mitigate CO <sub>2</sub> emissions that contribute to climate change and global warming.	2	4	8	Ensure that CO <sub>2</sub> emissions are calculated and baselines established. Set achievable, yearly targets to reduce emissions that contribute to climate change.
Failure to adapt to the impacts of climate change.	2	4	8	Ensure that climate change risk assessments are undertaken of Authority procedures and capital programme.
Failure to embed climate change practices into activities and processes.	2	4	8	Ensure that Members, staff and stakeholders are aware of climate change issues. Develop awareness measures and identify training needs within the corporate training programme.

## 9. HR Implications

- 9.1 A climate change awareness programme for Members, staff and stakeholders is essential if the Authority is to embed climate change considerations across all activities and actions including addressing



secondary supply chain and contractor impacts. Certain staff will require specific climate change training needs over time.

## **10. Environmental Implications**

10.1 According to London's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (consultation, Aug 2008), there has been very little conclusive research into the impact of climate change on waste production and waste management. However, it is anticipated that climate change will impact on waste through;

- Potential changes in the profile and volume of municipal waste;
  - High temperatures and rainfall may change packaging types;
  - Flooding will lead to an increase in the disposal damaged household products, perished foodstuff and waste infrastructure, as noted in the report on the 2005 Carlisle floods.
  - Impacts on the waste management process (from collection through to disposal);
  - Waste to be managed as close to its source as possible (London's Waste Management Strategy highlights the need for some 300 new facilities across London in order to be able to manage waste as close to its source as possible).
  - Site, buildings and equipment could be prone to flooding.
  - Extreme weather conditions (storms) high winds for example, could cause the closure of sites (including Landfill sites).
  - Buildings could suffer from subsidence (loss of moisture content in soils) or structural damage from high winds.
  - Whilst the Authority recognises the potential negative impacts of climate change it is also in a position to contribute positive benefits in addressing climate change e.g. the Authority could making use of Combined Heat and Power systems (energy from waste), could being self sufficient in energy (facility design) and switching to more environmentally benign transport fuels.

## **11. MWDA Potential contribution**

- 11.1 A paper, produced by the Authority in response to the above report (*Green Vision for Merseyside: MWDAs contribution to the Liverpool City Region*), identifies 3 Headline contributions from the Authority
- Climate change – carbon and methane reduction
  - Natural resource protection – resource recycling composting and reuse
  - Transport – reduction of waste miles, emissions, congestion and ill-health
- 11.2 The report also lists the possible impacts that the Authority in exercising its statutory functions could have on climate change at a sub regional level (Appendix 3)

## **12. Financial Implications**

- 12.1 In terms of the Authority, no specific financial implications can be identified at present, as future financial decisions are to be based on the Whole Life Cost and potentially the carbon footprint of a product or service.
- 12.2 Generally, the Stern Review estimates that tackling climate change will cost the UK 1% of GDP annually. Inaction however, is likely to cost considerable more; at least 5% of GDP each year.
- 12.3 Future consideration must be given to the potential introduction of carbon budgets in the UK (as proposed in the Climate Change Bill), which is likely to link emissions to costs.

## **13. Conclusion**

- 13.1 In the past year, much has happened across the Authority in relation to sustainability and climate change. Awareness has grown and we now have an Environmental Management System in place, which will help us to manage our emissions more effectively. We have continually maintained dialogue on sustainability and climate change issues with participants and have aspirations to attain BREEAM excellent standard for new facilities.
- 13.2 Such is the prominence of climate change both in the public domain and in political arenas that this commitment to tackle climate change will

demonstrate that we, as a leading organisation in Merseyside, are willing to 'do our bit' to help the region and sub-region.

- 13.3 Having a climate change policy will also make climate change a key driver in our role of delivering sustainable waste management and contributing to the reduction of GHG emissions in the region and sub-region.

## **14. Recommendations**

- 14.1 Members are asked to approve a climate change policy (Appendix 1) and an action plan (Appendix 2); and that the Authority should in addition to District Council improvement targets have regard to regional and sub-regional climate change action plans.

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The background documents to this report are open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of The Local Government Act 1972 - Nil.