
Audit & Governance Committee

28th July 2010

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Tackling Climate Change – A corporate response

Summary

1. Tackling climate change and the risks associated to a changing climate change need to be embedded into the risk management processes of CYC. Tackling climate change will require reducing greenhouse gas emissions across York and will also mean preparing and adapting the city for the likely impacts associated to climate change.

Background

Citywide approaches to tackle climate change

2. In September 2007 the Executive of the City of York Council agreed a city wide Climate Change Strategy to be developed in partnership with the Without Walls Partnership (WoW). This was a direct response to adopting a city wide approach to climate change.
3. As outlined in the Executive report of 8th June 2010, a consultation draft of a Climate Change Framework 2010-2015 (CCF) and a Climate Change Action Plan 2010 – 2013 (CCAP) have been approved for public consultation. These documents commit York to reducing citywide carbon dioxide emissions by 40% by 2020 and 80% by 2050.
4. Under the current LAA, NI 186 (Per capita CO₂ emissions in the LA area) CYC and WoW have committed to reducing Per capita CO₂ emissions in York by 12% from 2009/10 – 2011/12. To date just under a 10% reduction has been achieved (* Please note this data is collected nationally and issued to all local authorities annually. The data is 2 years out of date. For more details visit <http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/indicators/ni186/ni186.aspx>)
5. Under the current LAA, NI 188 (adapting to climate change) CYC and WoW have achieved level one of four levels for progress towards adapting the city to a changing climate.
6. As highlighted in a CMT report 7th April 2010 (Climate Change Adaptation Study and NI 188 Update) we now are beginning to understand the likely vulnerability of York to a changing climate and the impacts and consequences that may affect the city and CYC in the future.

Internal CYC approaches

7. In 2008, CYC committed to reducing its own carbon dioxide emissions from its estate and fleet by 25% by 2013. This is being delivered through a carbon management programme, led by the Sustainability team.
8. In conjunction with paragraph 3 above, the sustainability team have led the development of the city-wide climate change framework and action plan. A CYC version of this will be adapted as part of a new refreshed environmental sustainability strategy.
9. To date the sustainability team have also led the city's response to NI 188 and led the development of a local climate impact profile for York. This looks at past, current and future vulnerability of York in terms of weather and the predicted likely changes in climate as a result of climate change. A summary the likely impacts and consequences are detailed in Annex a.
10. climate change is not managed through the risk process for the city or CYC. Tackling climate change and the risks associated to a changing climate change need to be embedded into CYC processes in 2 distinct ways:
 - a. failure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across York
 - b. failure to prepare and adapt the city for the likely impacts associated to climate change.
11. As highlighted in the climate change adaptation CMT report 7th April 2010, and as a direct result of the paper, CMT agreed for climate change adaptation to become a CYC corporate risk.
12. Annex a summaries some of the risks associated to climate change for CYC and York.
13. The risks in relation to reducing emissions are:
 - Reputation
 - Financial (link to carbon penalties for failing against the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme(CRCEE))
14. In summary, the risks in relation to Climate Change Adaptation are:
 - Service delivery / availability
 - Reputation
 - Financial
15. In assessing the risks associated to climate change, care will need to be taken when determining CYC's responsibilities and responsibilities of other partners such as the Without Walls Board.

Next steps CYC

16. It is proposed that CYC directorates take responsibility for risks associated to the two strands of tackling climate change, and that plans and actions are embedded into departmental business plans,

as well as the corporate carbon management programme, and risk management processes. A pilot will be undertaken within City Strategy to understand how best to carry out such an assessment. This will primarily focus on climate change adaptation as the corporate carbon management programme will manage the reduction of CYC emissions. It is envisaged that risk assessments could be carried out by March 2011. (*this is dependant on the limited capacity of the current Sustainability Team and Risk Management team)

Citywide

17. It is also proposed that the opportunities for joint working through the WoW needs to be explored and a formalised risk assessment undertaken, and especially in regards to climate change adaptation. The Climate change framework and action plan can then incorporate all actions that ensure delivery against any identified climate change risks for the city (beyond CYCs scope).

Corporate Priorities

18. Addressing climate change is a key component to delivering on CYC's corporate ambition of delivering a sustainable city – *"We aim to be clean and green, reducing our impact on the environment while maintaining York's special qualities and enabling the city and its communities to grow and thrive"*

Recommendations

19. Tackling climate change is embedded into the risk management process of CYC.

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Report Approved Date

Specialist Implications Officer(s) Not applicable

Wards Affected ALL

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annex 1 – Summary of climate change risk

Annex 1

Climate change Risk

Failure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions – Citywide

Reputation:

- Failure to achieve the objectives and vision of the consultation draft climate change framework and action plan for York (and to meet other city-wide targets that include the Covenants of Mayors Commitment and Friends of the Earth 'Get Serious' campaign Commitment
- Failure to achieve the aims and objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy – Sustainable City Chapter
- Failure to achieve NI 186 (per capita reduction in CO2 emissions)

Failure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions – CYC only

Reputation:

- Failure to achieve Carbon Management Programme target of 25% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2013
- Failure to achieve NI 185 (reduction in local authority CO2 emissions)
- Poor performance in the CRCEE scheme
- Failure to lead the city in tackling climate change

Financial

- Poor performance in the CRCEE scheme and financial penalties
- Failure to achieve corporate targets around reducing energy consumption and associated savings on fuel bills.

Failure to prepare and adapt the city for the likely impacts associated to climate change – Citywide and CYC:

Service delivery / reputation / finance

Based on the York Local Climate Impact Profile (which looked at the past, current and future vulnerability of York to a changing climate) the study suggested that the climate projections predict that by 2050 the City of York will be experiencing the following principal climate effects;

- Increased frequency of extreme rainfall events;
- Changes in seasonal rainfall distribution causing drier summers, wetter winters
- Increased daily temperatures (2.5°C);
- Increased frequency of heatwaves.

Based on the existing vulnerability assessment, York is at increased risk of suffering from the following:

- A significant increased risk of social-economic and environmental damage and disruption caused by increased flooding (pluvial and fluvial) heatwaves, seasonal changes in rainfall and temperature;
- Estimated Annual Damage from climate change in the order of £95M to £158M per annum by 2050;
- Increased risk of public health issues from flooding and heatwaves;
- Changes to local biodiversity and the availability of water resources;
- Increased demands on public sector organisations to respond to more frequent and severe weather events;
- Potentially increased demands on public open space, recreation and tourism facilities;
- Increased disruption to service delivery, transport and logistics and business continuity;
- Potential decline in quality of key assets (e.g. cultural heritage) and York's quality of life and sense of place;
- Increased risk of bad publicity and negative public perception occurring from repeated flooding events.

Please note that through future adaptation responses, and an appropriate strategic level approach, preparing and adapting to a changing climate will help to dramatically increase the resilience of York to the predicted future impacts and consequences of climate change.