



Research to determine the attitudes of local people to climate change

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers the main findings from the research undertaken on behalf of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) regarding the attitudes of local people to Climate Change. The Commission presented their recommendations to the main findings from this research to Council Cabinet on the 16 March 2010. As requested at that meeting, this report responds to the various recommendations proposed by the Commission in order to slightly refocus the ongoing engagement process with local people that is essential to help meet the UK's 2050 carbon reduction target.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Cabinet notes the officer comments and accepts the recommendations made by the Climate Change Commission, outlined in paragraphs 4.5 to 4.9 inclusive.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To practically take forward pertinent findings from the research study undertaken by the Climate Change Commission into the attitudes of local people to climate change.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 In October 2009 the Climate Change Commission awarded a contract to Marketing Innovation Ltd of Loughborough to undertake a market research survey in order to find out:

1. the public's views on climate change
2. what specific actions the public had taken, or would be willing to take to reduce their contribution to climate change
3. how much people would be willing to invest in measures to mitigate climate change.

A report summarising the main findings from this exercise was presented to Council Cabinet on the 16 March 2010. This report also described the main objectives and methodology for undertaking the research which was based on the information received from 1003 interviews. Cabinet requested that officers consider the recommendations of the Commission and bring a paper to a future meeting.

- 4.2 The information elicited from this research will be useful to the Council and its LSP partners in that it will inform the direction of effort. The Council and its LSP partners are tasked, under National Indicator 186, with achieving carbon reductions across the city. This indicator, which forms part of the City's LAA, measures per capita percentage reduction in carbon dioxide emissions in the Local Authority area using the per capita CO₂ emissions from 2005 as the baseline year. Under NI186 the Council is tasked to reduce city-wide carbon emissions by 9.4% by 2010/11.

- 4.3 The Council's Climate Change and Energy Management Unit (CCEMU) has carried out a number of innovative projects over the years, aimed at improving the engagement of the general public in this area, including the Defra funded 7 Cs project and the bi-annual Eco-Fest. The Climate Change Strategy also contains a number of projects that can be informed by this research including:

1. ST3 – Employee engagement programme
2. SE3 – Schools engagement programme
3. CL2 – City-wide communications programme

- 4.4 Appended to this report is a table that summarises the CCEMU comments/reflections on those findings which stimulated a degree of debate and discussion. This analysis has helped to inform the responses to the Climate Change Commission recommendations which are outlined in the next section.

- 4.5 **Recommendation 1** - *The Council should consider the public to be relatively well informed about climate change when producing marketing, educational or publicity information on this issue.*

Response - This is generally recognised at a national level and we now need to focus more on presenting to the public easily accessible, ready made solutions so that local people can become part of the solution bridging the 'commitment to action gap'. This process is called behavioural change and is the next step when people understand the issue and need to know what they can do to help. We also need to promote the potential benefits/opportunities that may arise from climate change instead of focusing on the doom and gloom negative aspect.

- 4.6 **Recommendation 2** - *The Council should target information which aims to encourage the public to take action to reduce their carbon emissions at the following groups:*

- *Women*
- *People of 'middle age'.*

Response – It is acknowledged from the research findings that these groups may require special attention to more effectively engage. The research also indicates that the 70+ age group needs some convincing about the issue in general and the role they can play to make a difference. If these groups could become advocates of climate change they could potentially influence and bring on board other sections of the community.

- 4.7 **Recommendation 3** - *In these economically trying times the Commission feels the Council should demonstrate cost savings associated with efforts to reduce carbon emissions in any information that it produces on climate change.*

Response – In order for our communication programmes to be as effective as possible in bringing about behavioural change we cannot rely entirely on the altruistic reasons for individuals to act, but must be mindful of the financial incentives that may be needed to help people engage with climate change.

- 4.8 **Recommendation 4** - *The Commission recommends that any publications should adopt a 'we're in this together' approach which both informs the public about what the Council is doing on their behalf and provides information about what they can do to combat climate change.*

Response - This is very much the approach we have adopted to develop the city-wide climate change communications campaign that the Council has developed with the Derby Evening Telegraph. The aim of this project is to develop five different themed campaigns over the next 10 months focusing on households, schools, businesses, transport and big innovative ideas. The overall aim of the project is to provide the necessary advice, information and motivation about climate change to enable everyone to play a part. The project also has the backing and support of several other high profile organisations including Derby Homes and the University of Derby.

- 4.9 Since ultimately everything the Council does is for the benefit of the people of Derby, all service providers across the Council need to consider and take account of these findings as appropriate in future service delivery, communications and developments.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 - Implications Appendix 2 - Comments/reflections on the main findings from the exercise

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 None directly arising

Legal

- 2.1 None directly arising

Personnel

- 3.1 None directly arising

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 None directly arising

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 The project will contribute to the Council objective of **‘To contribute to reducing the effects of Climate Change in Derby’**.

Comments/reflections on the main findings from the exercise - **Appendix 2**

Question	Main findings	Comments/reflection
4.1.1 What does climate change mean to you?	Reasonably high awareness of well publicised/media friendly impacts in terms of higher temperatures, melting ice caps, flooding – 65% of responses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Few responses highlighting the positive benefits in terms of the innovation potential in delivering a low carbon economy. 2. Little awareness about the disruption to global weather systems which could occasionally result in very cold winters for the UK and warmer winters for those in more northern latitudes. 3. Relieved that only 30 comments came back from climate sceptics following the well publicised 'climate gate' allegations.
4.1.3 Is it likely that you and other Derby people will be affected by climate change?	63% of 16-25 year olds said that climate change will definitely/very likely affect them compared with a 49% response rate to this question from the 70+ age group.	1. In general throughout the survey there is less awareness, understanding and commitment to this issue from the 70+ age group compared to the 16-25 year group. Whilst in some respects this discrepancy is understandable taking into account the long-term implications of climate change we still need to get the necessary buy in from the 70+ age group. This discrepancy is also reflected in question 5 – 'How much do you worry about the likely impact of climate change?' which indicated that worries about climate change recede with age.
4.2.1 Who should take responsibility for climate change?	34% of respondents felt that sole responsibility lay with national and international bodies whereas 54% indicated that this responsibility should be shared by all (central, local government and ordinary people).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearly the 34% of respondees need to understand that individuals have a very big stake in making a difference in this area. 2. Only 1% of respondees indicated that climate change was the responsibility of the local council. This may indeed be the situation taking into account the Council's influence over the city's carbon footprint,
4.2.4 How likely are you to take action by reducing the energy you use/ your emissions?	84% stated they were 'definitely' or 'possibly' likely to take action on climate change with the older age groups less inclined to do so.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We need to make sure that this perceived support is actually translated into practical action to bridge the commitment to action gap. 2. Once again there is a marked discrepancy between the responses from younger and older people.

4.3.1 What steps have you or your family taken or are likely to take in the next 12 months to tackle the problem.	The majority of easy actions e.g. recycling, installing loft insulation have been acted on with more challenging actions including cutting down on flying and the installation of domestic micro- renewables being far less popular.	1.The challenge here is how to move individuals along the carbon reduction continuum bearing in mind that some of the first step measures are the most important e.g. the installation of cavity wall and loft insulation. 2. It should also be recognised that some people will need to gain a footing on the continuum in the first place and may not be able to move along because of socio-economic reasons.
4.3.2 Why have you taken these actions?	42% of respondents had taken action to both save money and help the environment. 26% were purely financially driven with 27% motivated through environmental considerations.	1. It is clear from the responses that financial considerations are at the forefront of the decision making process and need to be considered in developing future behavioural change campaigns/projects.
4.4.2 How to obtain help and advice.	The majority of respondents said they would seek advice from an independent source such as the council.	1. This is a gratifying response and helps support national findings where local authorities are trusted to provide reliable and unbiased information to the public. This provides the ideal remit to build on the good work we have done in the past to further educate and inform the public about what they can do to help.
4.4.3 Would you like more information on how to tackle climate change?	77% do not want any more information on the subject itself.	1. Once again this response is consistent with national research which indicates that the public, mainly through the mass media, are aware of the issue and have formed their own opinions about it. We now need to move into the behavioural phase where we provide advice and information about the potential solutions and make this accessible and relevant to local people.
4.4.4 What would you like information on?	Whilst 77% did not want any more information the remaining 23% did in the following areas: 1. energy saving advice and information at home. 2. general information about the background to climate change and cutting your carbon footprint 3. financial support, grants and other incentives.	1. This information is useful to help target the focus of any future work aimed at changing the behaviour of local people. The area indicated in number 3 is consistent with 4.3.2 which indicates that financial considerations are at the forefront of the decision making process.