

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 13<sup>th</sup> December 2012

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Policy and Resources

**PORTFOLIOS:** Environmental Sustainability and Economic Development

**SUBJECT:** Liverpool City Region Covenant of Mayors and Climate Local

**WARDS:** Borough Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The report outlines the benefits and implications of signing up to two climate change commitments; the EU Covenant of Mayors, which commits the Council to preparing a Sustainable Energy Action Plan and taking action to reduce carbon emissions within the borough and the Local Government Association's 'Climate Local' which requires commitments and actions in terms of both carbon reduction and adapting to future climate change. The Environment and Urban Renewal PPB has considered and endorsed the approach.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board endorse that the Council signs the EU Covenant of Mayors and 'Climate Local'.**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The European Commission launched the Covenant of Mayors in 2008 to endorse and support the efforts deployed by local authorities in the implementation of sustainable energy policies. It was recognised that action at a local level was vital to achieve the EU's carbon reduction targets and local authorities played a major role.

3.2 The Covenant of Mayors is a charter of commitments, signed by the local authority Mayor or other authorised representative (Appendix A). The key commitments outlined in the Adhesion Form (Appendix B) are as follows:

- To go beyond the objectives set by the EU for 2020, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by at least 20%;
- To submit a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) within one year of signing, outlining how the objectives will be reached;
- To submit with the SEAP a Baseline Emission Inventory (BEI);
- To submit an implementation report at least once every two years;
- To organise community 'Energy Days' to encourage energy efficiency; and
- To attend and contribute to the annual EU Conference of Mayors for a Sustainable Energy Europe (this has been confirmed as optional with the Covenant of Mayors Office).

3.3 The scope of the local SEAP is action at a local level within the competence of the local authority, covering the whole geographical area of the authority, with the main target sectors being buildings and transport.

- 3.4 The local SEAP should outline which structures are in place within the local authority to implement the actions and monitor the results and the financial resources that will be made available. Signing the Covenant allows access to alternative European funding schemes and advice/support from the Covenant of Mayors Office.
- 3.5 Liverpool Council signed the Covenant in October 2011 and are the only Liverpool City Region authority to do so to date. The City Region SEAP, launched in July 2012, included as a key recommendation that all LCR authorities sign the commitment. A total of 33 UK local authorities are registered as signatories.
- 3.6 The LGA launched 'Climate Local' in June 2012 as a replacement to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change which the Council signed in 2007. This again requires the signing of a commitment to address climate change (Appendix C) but is wider in scope than the Covenant of Mayors in that it also addresses climate resilience and managing the future impacts of climate change such as extreme weather. Two authorities have signed the commitment with 16 others signalling an intention to sign.
- 3.7 For Climate Local, the Council is required to submit its commitments and actions within 6 months of signing.

#### **4.0 Implications for Halton Borough Council**

- 4.1 The EU target is a 20% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2020 based on 1990 levels. It is recognised that the majority of areas do not have data relating to 1990, so the guidance states that the first year for which the authority has reliable data should be used as the baseline year. The Government have provided data on local area emissions since 2005 and it is proposed that this is used as the baseline year. The latest data available relates to 2010, where a 11% reduction had been achieved from the 2005 baseline year. This means that a target reduction of at least 20% by 2020 is a challenge but not unrealistic.
- 4.2 Data supplied by the Government on borough wide emissions, in addition to that collated on the council's carbon emissions, means that preparation of the required Baseline Emissions Inventory should not be an onerous task.
- 4.3 The development of the Council's Carbon Management Plan, Halton's Low Carbon Plan, and LCR SEAP will all provide strong foundations for the development of the Halton local SEAP which must be produced within one year of signing. Additional work will be required, particularly around quantifying the carbon reduction of projects, developing the SEAP document itself and completing the required templates for submission.
- 4.4 The Council already engages with registered housing providers and the Energy Savings Trust to engage with the local community on energy efficiency at events and continuation of this work will fulfil the requirement to hold 'Energy Days'.
- 4.5 For Climate Local, all that is required is publication of the Council's commitments and actions within 6 months of signing with a regular refresh as local priorities develop. The Council's Carbon Management Plan and Halton's Low Carbon Plan will form the foundations for this document.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The Covenant of Mayors and Climate Local initiatives both secure and highlight the commitment of local authorities to addressing climate change in their areas. Signing up to these initiatives links closely to the Council's existing low carbon work through the Carbon Management Plan, Low Carbon Plan, regeneration programme and is a key recommendation in the Liverpool City Region SEAP, launched in July 2012 (subject of a further report to this Board). It would also provide access to additional support on energy reduction from the Covenant of Mayors' Office and EU funding schemes. The main requirement of the Covenant is to commit to a carbon reduction target and develop a SEAP within one year of signing, with Climate Local requiring publication of commitments and actions within six months of signing.

## **6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Signing up to the Covenant of Mayors will require the council to produce a local Sustainable Energy Action Plan identifying actions to meet a 20% carbon reduction by 2020. For Climate Local, the Council is required to submit its commitments and actions within 6 months of signing. Both actions will support the wider work of the council in developing the borough's low carbon economy.

## **7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 At this stage there are no other implications associated with the Covenant of Mayors or Climate Local.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

- 8.1 The Covenant of Mayors and Climate Local will support the borough's Low Carbon economy and regeneration programme and improving energy efficiency in homes.

## **9.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 9.1 Not applicable.

## **10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 10.1 Vulnerable groups are at a greater risk from the effects of climate change such as extreme weather events (heat waves, flooding etc). Reducing carbon emissions and the effects of climate change will therefore have a positive impact.

## **11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTIONS 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

### **Appendices:**

- Appendix A: Covenant of Mayors Text
- Appendix B: Covenant of Mayors Adhesion Form
- Appendix C: Climate Local Commitment