

Briefing Note

Climate Local information day, LGA, London, 20th June 2012

Summary: This event was held a week before the Climate Local 'soft launch' at the LGA Annual Conference to update stakeholders on progress and provide some opportunity for comment and input. Expected to be fully live by the autumn.

Introduction to Climate Local: Provided by Abigail Burrige and Kamal Panchal, senior LGA advisors on mitigation and adaptation respectively. Talked about the process of getting here over the last 18 months and some sense of what Climate Local now looks like beyond the initial menu of options.

- Expectation from LGA that councils will publicly declare their local targets and actions within about 6 months of signing the CL commitment.
- Also that they will share their learning and experiences via LGA Knowledge Hub and also participate in some kind of annual reporting mechanism.
- About 12 councils have expressed interest in signing up, including Nottingham, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire.

Q&A/comments included 'menu approach welcome' (Cllr Clark, Nottingham) whether other public bodies and partnerships can sign up to CL? (Ailsa Gibson, NW - yes), why not focus CL on adaptation only? (Matthew Bird, Lewes - no), tell us some more about the reporting element of CL? (me - 'not yet fixed, need further discussion with Steering Group about how to do it, whether to use a standard annual template, or whether to vary focus each year, eg. on public health' KP)

Views from Partners

Hannah-Jane McNamara, DCLG: CL 'in the spirit of Localism' 'pleased to be supporting it', reference to 'timely, hugely informative Committee on Climate Change report on local gov't (launched last month) working with DECC on new approach to reducing emissions from the Built Environment (by consolidating several areas of existing practice/regulation like retrofit, Green Deal, Building Control, planning, Display Energy Certificates) which will be available as part of the CL toolkit later. Also working with Defra on National Adaptation Programme following launch of UK Climate Change Risk Assessment in Jan 2012.

Meg Patel, Defra: Now describe their role within Defra as 'Climate Ready' (a shared description along with the Environment Agency), talked about the UK CCRA and the relevance for LG (ie. that risks differ according to are geography and help to

provide local evidence and that the Economics of Climate Resilience project is due to report initially in August, with results published early next year. She described their view of the council role as 'driving local resilience' and said that they were doing some work with Core Cities (*which inc's Nottingham*) and London Boroughs in recognition of the particular climate challenges that cities face. To help raise the profile of adaptation with members and highlight the role of councils they organised a summit recently co-chaired by SoS Caroline Spelman and Sir Merrick Cockell, LGA Chair which produced a joint statement.

Steve Ives, DECC: Welcomed CL as a way of bringing together some of DECC and LGA's priorities into one package (Green Deal, Memorandum of Understanding, Renewable Heat, HECA, etc.) Mentioned that they are about to get a secondee from LB Havering to help review the MoU. Green Deal 'flagship initiative' for ministers, which attempts to introduce a new market with range of different players (Wilmott Dixon, Kingfisher, Keepmoat alongside the energy companies) with the potential for additional benefits of local economic growth, health and wellbeing, etc. alongside energy/carbon. Framework legislation brought out last week along with DECC's response to consultation. Was keen to play up role of councils in GD (Birmingham, Newcastle, but also West Sussex, Cornwall, Norfolk and Kent - *who he said had very good event recently*). CL could provide some of the answers to the requests for support that DECC gets from some council officers.

Kristen Guida, Climate UK: explained that CUK is a new organisation that brings together the network of 9 regional climate change partnerships and their devolved administration equivalents. Collectively have a long track record of supporting councils on climate change and a common UK wide shared interest in adaptation. In England, CUK has an 18 month partnership agreement with the Environment Agency to provide adaptation outreach. Have lots of collective resources, evidence and tools that are potentially useful to councils and their partners and strong links with research community.

Q&A

Q. Oliver Myers, LB Camden: Flooding and Public Health impacts research? A. Yes, by HPA
 Q. Cllr Alan Clark, Nottingham: How do councils access funding agreements with Ofgem? and Sarah Davies, Gtr Manchester: Looking forward to signing up to CL. Energy suppliers/distributors aren't locally accountable to LG.

A. DECC: ECO has new brokerage mechanism and Energy Act provides new powers to DECC to take action on this.

Q. Chitra Nadajarah, Hampshire: How can CL/LGA help to engage and challenge members?

A. LGA: have involved members in the CL development process and have variety of other ways to do this in future, inc. through First magazine which goes to every member.

Views from Climate Local Councils

1. City (Nottingham). Useful member perspective from Cllr Clark who has Energy and Sustainability portfolio (narrower focus than many of his counterparts which enables greater concentration and leadership). Sees value of CL in helping to reaffirm high level commitment – taking paper to full council in July, and to talk to local partners and gov't dept's in a way that didn't happen during Nottingham Declaration period. Doing lots of interesting work on resident engagement for PV (now have over 2,000 systems installed) by using local resident champions to talk to their neighbours. Have found that by combining CESP scheme and PV scheme, they can save £600/house on scaffolding costs (only needed once). Drove PV scheme through to maximise benefits before FiTS rate dropped, by holding fortnightly board meetings. Construction for new tram lines is now underway. Commented that adaptation is part of the council's approach but that it gets less traction than mitigation with local people as it's seen as 'the council's job'.

2. County (Kent). Carolyn McKenzie. Have been on incremental journey on climate change since signing the ND. Their CL commitments will include a Green Deal partnership for Kent, development of 15 local resilience plans, continued rollout of SWIMS (innovative multi-agency online system for recording extreme weather impacts in order to gather data to inform future decisions. They will also have targets on water use (being in a dry area of the country) and surface water flooding (which is a particular problem).

3. District (Eastleigh, Hampshire) Has enjoyed longstanding high-level political commitment over long period and was a 'Tackling Climate Change' Beacon Council in 2008. Carbon Management Plan achieved 15% reduction over 5 years, but also has lots of risk/adaptation interests, particularly regarding its important biodiversity assets. CL will help with accountability, learning and knowledge sharing, improving data, demonstrating commitment and leadership and partnership working.

Table Discussions

There were six facilitated table discussions to look at some of the initial resources: the initial menu of options and two out of seven guides (mainstreaming climate change and local economic growth, with energy, natural

environment, planning & built environment, transport, waste, health & communities to come). One of the conclusions was that developing guidance is challenging given the wide variation in levels of knowledge and achievement and scale of operation between different councils. Sarah Davies (Gtr Manchester) suggested that 'crowd sourcing' would be a good way of finding out what people need on the one hand, and what others (like her joint authority) can offer on the other. Several people asked for live documentation to be provided so that it can be continuously updated over time, particularly replicable successes and achievements to enable smaller councils to follow on more easily.

It wasn't talked about very much, but the **LGA Knowledge Hub** has been revamped and this is where the new guidance and web materials will be made available:

<https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/home>

The Environment and Sustainability group (formerly Community of Practice) is still there, with some 1,500 members and I believe the functionality of these groups has been improved to make them a bit more flexible. There are some documents in the KH library, including the new Summit Agreement between Defra's Sec of State and the LGA Chair, Sir Merrick Cockell.

Mike Peverill
Climate East Midlands
E: Mike.peverill@emcouncils.gov.uk
T: 01664 502 628
M: 07854 284 588
W: www.climate-em.org.uk
T: @ClimateEM