

Climate change strategy

East Riding's of Yorkshire climate change strategy

Relevant to: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Introduction

Climate change is already affecting life in the East Riding. The weather is getting milder and sea levels along the coast are rising. As climate change continues, it is likely that the number of very hot summer days will rise, rainfall will increase during the winter as will the likelihood of stormy weather.

The East Riding of Yorkshire Council (population: 312,772; area: 241,934 hectares) published its first climate change strategy in April 2003. This is the first time that the council has considered climate change issues, and the policies in the strategy are based on the best information currently available. Over the next few years, more data will be available as the forecasts become more reliable. The council's approach to climate change must therefore remain flexible and this strategy will develop as better information becomes available.

Aims & objectives

The strategy links in with the sustainability framework, which was produced by the Regional Assembly in 2001 and sets out the region's aims for sustainable development. This includes a target to reduce emissions of gases that contribute to climate change by more than 20 per cent on 1990 levels by 2010.

The council's strategy:

- Examines the evidence for climate change and the projections for how it could affect life in the East Riding and the delivery of council services.
- Formulates policies to define the council's position and role in addressing the causes of climate change and managing the impacts.

- Considers what action the council could take to address the causes of climate change and manage the impacts.
- Sets out what the council will do with its partners to adapt to and manage climate change.

Who is involved?

- The East Riding of Yorkshire Council coordinates and promotes the programme. The following departments are involved: sustainable development, property management, strategic support, operational services, directorate/economic development, tourism & forward planning, personnel & performance.
- The Regional Assembly and Business in the Environment promotes and supports the issue of climate change. In 2001 it produced the sustainability framework, which sets out the region's aims for sustainable development.
- Yorkshire and the Humber Business in the Environment engaged key regional bodies in the process of evaluating the main impacts of climate change in the region.
- The East Riding local strategic partnership encourages people at home and work to reduce emissions of gases that contribute to climate change as well as looking for ways to mitigate the harmful impacts. It is comprised of key organisations in the East Riding from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. It was formed to identify and respond to the priorities and needs of residents.

The approach

The council is already taking actions that will help to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. For example:

- In the field of energy use, the council is improving the energy efficiency of facilities and assets and increasing insulation in council properties.
- On transport, the council is changing engine fuels to cleaner alternatives and implementing a green travel plan for the authority.
- Regarding waste, the council is developing reduction/recycling/re-use schemes as a high priority and instigating waste management strategies.
- In relation to planning, the council is encouraging development that reduces the need to travel and encouraging innovative sustainable design for new build or refurbishment.

A full list of the council's actions can be found in the strategy - see further information.

However, there are opportunities for the council to do more. To tackle climate change problems the council is putting into practice an action plan for the period December 2002 to December 2004. At this early stage in the development of the council's approach to climate change, the objectives of the strategy are focused on activities over which the council has direct influence and areas that the local strategic partnership, with the council, can address. The objectives follow.

Reduce emissions of climate changing gases from the delivery of council services by 10 per cent by December 2004

Example activities:

- Energy efficiency: benchmark energy consumption across council owned properties by March 2003 and formulate a corporate energy strategy for the authority by April 2003.
- Transport: carry out surveys of authority employees and fleets to identify level of emissions by June 2003; create a green travel plan for the council by March 2004 and increase opportunities for the training of drivers on the efficient use of vehicles by December 2004.

Consider climate change issues in development and review of all relevant council policies

Example activity:

- Appraise all policies for climate change impacts during policy development by December 2005.

Make a commitment to address climate change issues in East Riding of Yorkshire

Example activities:

- There are five action groups created under each of the five community aims of the local strategic partnership community plan. These are 'a healthy environment', 'improved health', 'greater prosperity', 'reduced crime' and 'lifelong learning'. Each action group can create 'task' and 'finish' groups to tackle issues as identified. Currently the healthy environment action group has task groups addressing energy/climate change, waste, natural environment, local transport, and citizenship. Each task group is comprised of regional business partners.
- A statement of commitment was made at board member level at their first full meeting in 2003.

Raise awareness and understanding of climate change in the community

Example activities:

- Ongoing facilitation of awareness rising amongst colleagues, members and partners.
- Hold an internal seminar on climate change impacts by March 2003.
- Local strategic partnership to facilitate seminars on climate change impacts within the district.

Encourage other organisations to reduce emissions of gases that contribute to climate change

Example activities:

- Establish a climate change task group to support and develop initiatives to reduce emissions of climate changing gases and adapt to climate change in the East Riding area.
- Review external funding opportunities to facilitate support and development.

Achievements

The council has created a baseline for fossil fuel use but has been unable to effectively benchmark against other authorities because of a lack of information. In addition a change in the calculation requirements by central government has resulted

in current information being collated in the wrong format, rendering the current data sets inadequate. A draft sustainable energy strategy is currently up for consultation and the council is also creating a sustainable procurement strategy. The local strategic partnership has also adopted the climate change strategy and the healthy environment action group has now established a climate change/energy task group amongst its business partners. Finally, the council has evaluated and audited its own energy consumption and fossil fuel use.

Next steps

The effectiveness of this strategy will be monitored in terms of how it is reducing emissions that contribute to climate change. There is uncertainty about future emissions of these gases since it is not possible to be sure about how population, economies and energy technologies will influence emissions.

Lessons learned/issues raised

The first review of the strategy will allow the council to gauge its current progress against the strategy and assess whether it is on target. All the current indications are that the council is on target and is, in fact, probably exceeding the goals it has set itself.

Further information

A full copy of the strategy can be obtained from East Riding's website here:
www.eastriding.gov.uk/.

The Energy Saving Trust offers a free enquiries service via our dedicated Practical help team – the team will undertake to answer any query regarding sustainable energy or sustainable road transport within a maximum of three working days.

At the time of publication and to the best of our knowledge, the information contained in this case study was correct. This case study was first published in March 2003.

Practical help cannot vouch for any of the organisations involved.

Practical help
T: 0870 241 2089
F: 0870 130 8831

E: practicalhelp@est.org.uk
W: www.est.org.uk/housingbuildings

