



Local Government Association

overview of the evidence presented to Local Government Climate Change Commission

LGA climate change commission



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Local Government Analysis and Research (LGAR)

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Annex 1 Responses to European call for evidence

Rough translation of response from Bretagne, Pays de la Loire, Poitou Charentes

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Local Government Climate Change Commission (the commission) was launched on 12 March 2007 to consider how local government can respond more effectively to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and deal with the impact of climate change.

As part of its work, in spring 2007 the commission launched an open call for written evidence on all aspects of how local authorities can tackle climate change more effectively. Whilst an open call for evidence, the commission requested information on a number of specific issues of relevance to its deliberations. The deadline for the call was 1 June 2007 and some 60 written submissions (of varying length but averaging 10 pages or so) were received from a variety of different organisations and individual representing a variety of interests.

The Local Government Association (LGA) commissioned the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research to provide a synthesis of the responses in the form of a short report summarising any key themes and identifying whether there are any particular patterns and convergences within the responses. This report provides this output.

1.2 General approach and report structure

Clearly, in providing a synthesis of responses, the objective is to cover as many of the responses, views and issues raised by all respondents as possible (preferably all). However, owing to the obvious constraints of time and budget, there is a need to prioritise the analysis of 700+ pages of evidence.

Our first priority has been to ensure that the specific issues identified by the commission in its call for evidence were covered robustly. Clearly, these needed to be a priority because these are directly related to the commission's objectives. The issues identified by the commission were as follows:

1. What are the main drivers for councils to tackle climate change, both mitigating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impact of climate change? In what way, could the drivers be strengthened?
2. What are the main barriers and constraints to councils tackling climate change more effectively? How can they be dismantled?
3. A number of councils are leading the way in tackling climate change – what are the key success factors? What is inhibiting success in other councils?
4. Given constraints on resources, what are the most and least productive areas for council action and what are the implications for more effective action?
5. How can councils work in partnership in their local areas more effectively?
6. What policy and practical support is needed to drive further action?
7. What are the key messages for local and national government in setting policy for emissions reductions and building adaptive capacity?

Overall, the majority of responses provided useful and direct comment on these issues specifically (occasionally with additional evidence being supplied). In order to provide a synthesis of viewpoints focused on the issues of most concern, then, we began by identifying responses with content that specifically addressed those issues identified by the commission. Responses relevant to each of the questions were grouped loosely into categories of respondent. The loose categories and the number of responses are summarised below.

	% of total response	% of responses focussed on questions
Councils	55%	79%
Other government and local government organisations	13%	43%
Interest and 'pressure' groups	6%	100%
Business, private institutions and associations	17%	33%
Regional bodies	6%	100%

In general, those responses that didn't specifically address the commission's questions tended either to be copies of responses sent for past consultations by others (and tended not to address the specific issues that the commission was set up to address), provided information on specific issues that are related but not specific to the commission's stated goals, or discussed the respondents' commercial services or other work and their associated benefits.

Responses from councils make up the bulk of returns. Using this as a starting point, we have sought to collate all of the issues raised by councils themselves. We have then worked through each of the responses from other categories of respondents identifying additional issues or detail not obviously identified by councils, where there may be some contradiction with views of other respondents, or where evidence backs up issues raised elsewhere.

As will be seen from the remainder of the report we have 'woven' the actual text of responses together to form the synthesis (given in 'quotes' and *italics*). In doing this, we have sought to maintain an independence from the issue – treating the task merely as an administrative one. Clearly, as it is the role of the Local Government Climate Change Commission to make interpretations and draw recommendations from the evidence, it would be inappropriate for us to put our own interpretation on respondents' messages and add comment and interpretation.

To this end we have not knowingly omitted anything and, to the extent possible, have tried to retain the 'tell it like it is' flavour of the responses. However, owing to the number of similar views represented by each individual 'quotes', repeated identification of the source of any given 'quote' would be impractical. Sources of views can be identified from our 'master copy' of collated responses which can be supplied to the commission if required. Text identifying the source of the 'quote' is only retained where it is of relevance to the points made.

2. Evidence in relation to the commission's specific questions

2.1 What are the main drivers for councils to tackle climate change, both mitigating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impact of climate change? In what way could the drivers be strengthened?

2.1.1 Councils' views on drivers

A number of drivers (past and present) are identified by councils, ranging from the general to issues and actions in relation to specific areas (such as transport and land use planning).

Before covering council's views on what the drivers have been, it is worth framing this in the context of views on the adequacy of regulation, guidance and targets from central government. Here, without exception, there is a view (from councils and others) that the policy signals from central government have not been robust or consistent. In this respect, many of the views on what the main drivers are relate, in part, to what (additional) drivers there have been in the (historical) absence of, for example, a statutory duty to take steps to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

This view is neatly summarised by the following response "*in the absence of a statutory duty to prepare a climate change strategy, or specific resourcing by government to do this, many councils will be driven by: a sense of responsibility; concern for their reputation; recent rapid rises in energy and fuel costs; and by increasing public concern*".

Informal corporate and social responsibility - leadership

The need to make climate change a priority within all of the other roles and responsibilities of councils is a recurrent theme. This is where many criticise the lack of guidance and requirement on councils to 'force' this to happen.

In the absence of such requirements, a number of responses from councils note that they see it as their responsibility and that drivers have "*initially been political and quasi-political. By that we mean that pressures are felt by councillors and officers of local authorities from the communities they serve*". In many cases, action has been taken because of a "*local demand for leadership on climate change*".

That said, another recurrent theme in the responses is the issue of leadership from councillors and senior officers. Here a typical response is that "*success seems to happen when there is political support and commitment but only when it is backed by action and questions at a senior level. Accepting that it's 'important but not a priority' doesn't produce the required responses or the resources to follow up opportunities*".

Conversely, as will be seen under later questions, the lack of leadership is a major limiter of success. Some responses identify pressure felt by councillors when doorstep campaigning for elections and receiving cross questioning from the electorate on their position on climate change. Here, one or two responses identify that "*the politics of political parties at a National level is becoming a driver and the climate change agenda has shown how a united front from major political parties can make it easier to gain commitment from local councillors*".

Taking on 'voluntary' commitments and partners

As is noted by one respondent, local authorities have "*a clear local democratic leadership role as the only body elected by, and accountable to, the whole community*" (ODPM, 2004). In pursuit of a range of sustainability issues (including climate change) a number of councils make commitments such as signing the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change or wider initiatives such as the Aalborg Convention.

A number of councils cite the usefulness of the Nottingham Declaration, not just from the perspective of the guidance that it provides, but the “*management buy-in*” it helps to deliver. Existing activities such as those under LA21 also help to deliver management buy in and promote the making of links between sustainable development and the need to address climate change. A few councils identify that climate change was initially identified as a key strategic driver through the Local Agenda 21 process and the subsequent Local Agenda 21 strategy and that this has been reinforced by the Aalborg Commitment.

Other initiatives that are cited as being useful from the perspective of securing management buy in and activity more generally include the Beacon Council scheme. In addition, from responses, councils appear to be attracted to the ability to claim a status such as ‘Beacon Council’ or ‘Environment City’ or other expressions of ‘excellence’. These would seem to promote and momentum in relation to taking on sustainability and environmental issues.

Regional drivers

Some councils note that a variety of regional drivers have also been useful to raise profiles, management buy-in, and drive action in relation to climate change issues. These include:

- Sustainable Development Frameworks;
- Environment Strategies;
- Regional Economic Strategies – economic growth within environmental limits;
- Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS);
- Regional Renewable Energy Strategies; and
- Regional Low Carbon Homes and Fuel Poverty Strategies.

Cost and efficiency savings

The “*need to reduce operating costs through efficiency savings*” is identified by a few councils as being an important driver in relation to, particularly, energy management. At least one response, for example, notes that “*effective energy management presents opportunities for cost savings thereby releasing money for other uses. Gershon’s Review of Public Sector Efficiency means local authorities should be looking at all opportunities for efficiencies and savings within their own buildings*”.

Fuel security

“*Increasingly, fuel security is seen as a driver to tackle climate change and ways for generating power locally need to be put in place*”.

The need to manage risks

A few councils identify the fact that climate change is already having an impact in their areas and that this has acted as a driver for addressing climate change. Issues listed include subsidence, increased demand for limited open space during longer summers, fuel poverty, exacerbation of health complaints, and flooding.

2.1.2 Councils’ views on strengthening drivers

Clear and consistent policy, regulation, guidance and targets

Whilst council respondents highlight that there has been a lack of clear and consistent policy and regulation from central government, a number of respondents emphasise that, more recently, steer from central government is becoming a more important driver.

A number of respondents point out that a key driver for local government action on climate change is now the local government white paper (of October 2006) "*which suggests that local government has a pivotal role to play in mitigating and adapting to climate change, and puts a new duty on local authorities to 'lead their community and their local partners on climate change'*".

Another key driver identified by respondents is the Audit Commission, "*who will inspect councils via the refreshed Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime on how they are delivering their leadership role on climate change*". At the same time, many other respondents highlight the fact that, since the associated Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) (Energy Consumption/Efficiency BVPI180) was deleted (after 2005) there has been no content oriented towards issues in relation to climate change. Interestingly, a response from a Scottish council notes that the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 Best Value Guidance is an important driver as it "*places a duty on local authorities to achieve sustainable development through best value mechanisms including climate change*".

At least one council identifies that "*it is expected that climate change targets will appear in Local Area Agreements (LAA), and the Secretary of State will also have the power to identify partners with responsibility to achieve these targets and hold them to account*".

Other drivers mentioned include:

- proposed targets outlined in the draft Climate Change Bill;
- Climate Change Programme;
- Energy White Paper & Energy Review;
- Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (with the addition of "*this is a key driver in the domestic sector but the legislation has no teeth*");

In relation to planning and building control:

- PPS 1 Sustainable Development;
- PPS 1 Supplement – Climate Change;
- PPS 22 Renewable Energy;
- Code for Sustainable Homes;
- Building a Greener Future; and
- "*making BREEAM assessments and Sustainability Appraisal formalised requirements on the council have helped drive forward action*".

In considering how all drivers could or should be strengthened, the responses from councils seem to be focused on the following related factors:

- forcing the issue to be regarded as a priority by councils and council leaders/officials;
- partly therein, achieving focussed, effective and measurable action in relation to climate change actions (mitigation and adaptation); and
- 'backing up' and underpinning councils' decisions in relation to action to mitigate and adapt to climate change (ie justifying decisions, local policies and strategies).

These issues come up frequently in relation to all questions posed by the commission.

Making the issue a priority

Almost all respondents identify that "*action on climate change is not a statutory requirement*", with some adding that "*climate change is not considered to be a priority area for the council compared to community safety, housing provision, waste management, etc*".

A number identify that councils *"need to be given targets to further strengthen management buy-in and support for work to continue in this area"*.

In terms of such targets, some councils identify that proposals to extend CPA and LAA will help to address the issue that *"councils must be provided with stronger incentives to lead community efforts to tackle climate change. Defra's proposed indicators for the new Local Government Performance Framework are good as they cut across both internal climate change issues and our community leadership role. We would wholeheartedly support them as they will significantly raise the status of climate change within councils but they must come with additional resources. The reform of LAAs may provide the opportunity for councils to allocate additional resource to tackling climate change, but unless a mandatory stretch target, will be competing against more politically sensitive issues such as crime, health and education. Additionally, the proposed Energy Performance Commitment will strengthen the financial driver for larger local authorities."* Also, *"ensuring that the latter two points on CPA and LAA targets are implemented in a robust manner that will require authorities to take action, report on and be assessed on will help strengthen these drivers"*.

Others are less convinced that existing proposals for changes to performance indicators will be sufficient noting that *"although all of these drivers are welcome none places a statutory requirement on local government to address climate change – even the three emerging local government climate change performance indicators are voluntary. If local government is to meet the challenge and urgency of climate change it will need statutory and challenging carbon reduction targets and be resourced properly to achieve them – it may also require additional powers. A parallel can be seen in the setting of statutory waste targets and penalties on local government which has resulted in achieving a step change in this area"*.

A typical view is that *"government should establish or strengthen:*

- *statutory targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions*
- *statutory requirements for adaptation measures*
- *adequate, reliable funding mechanisms for both reducing GHG emissions and implementing adaptation measures"*.

Also, *"a mandatory requirement to include climate change in sustainable community strategies, LAAs, corporate plans and service planning as a cross cutting issue"* and that *"if such legal obligations were applied to the reduction of carbon emissions, it is anticipated that the management of, and investment in such issues would significantly improve"*.

There appears to be a general consensus in responses that there is a need for councils to have a clear statutory duty to consider and act on issues in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation in all areas of activity and influence. There also seems to be a consensus that targets under, for example CPA, would greatly help raise the issue as a priority. At the same time, there is a clear view that, to address the issues, councils need to be supported in their efforts by central government including with sufficient resources, incentives and, perhaps, additional powers (issues which are discussed later). At the same time, one respondent adds a caveat that *"more recently governmental policy pressures have become additional drivers and this will accelerate the progress made. In terms of strengthening these drivers, the fact is that the combination of community and governmental pressures are powerful now. The challenge for local government will already be tough. Further, whilst there is very broad acceptance of the facts behind these policies, any further acceleration could meet with resistance from significant sectors in the community – whether that be business or residents. It is critical that the green agenda move along at a pace that is consistent with public opinion"*.

In addition to new requirements/targets, a number of responses highlight the need to reinforce existing instruments. For example, views include that *"it is clear that the code for sustainable homes needs to be made mandatory if it is to have any teeth. There is also a need for a complementary and mandatory code for non-domestic buildings with mandatory measures"*. In terms of transport, a few councils note *"the requirement for local authorities to develop local transport plans that achieve sustainable transport outcomes"* and *"there appears to be a need to address the imbalance in resources allocated to infrastructure projects compared to initiatives to promote more sustainable transport options"*.

One council expresses the view that *"the number of local authorities signing up to the Nottingham Declaration is an important driver but it is not so much the commitment but the action taken that is most important. Whilst the government are encouraging councils to sign up, they should explicitly require councils to take action both within their own areas of operations and also within LSPs (through CPA or its successor). Placing a duty on partner organisations to co-operate could strengthen this approach"*.

Issues in relation to adaptation

In relation to adaptation, many councils' views are represented by the following: *"adaptation still has not achieved the same status as mitigation and is currently under-represented across the UK climate change portfolio. There are no metrics to help measure how well adapted an area or activity is – we feel that until there is a way to measure adaptation little progress will be made"*.

There is also the view that there is a need for greater clarity and consistency from central government *"an example includes the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme which used 1980s temperatures to inform the building programme. This leads to danger that new schools will not be sufficiently adapted to higher temperatures in 2030s and beyond"*.

Others identify the need to promote *"greater linkages with emergency planning and completion of risk assessments"* and the need to *"ensure good information on climate change and the links to public health is fed through to regional and local resilience fora"*.

2.1.3 Other government and local government organisations

Other respondents mirror many of the views of councils identifying the need for *"greater support for awareness-raising activities from national government and the LGA in terms of providing consistent messaging and campaign materials from a central source that could be utilised by local government. These could be regionally focused to provide a more local flavour to climate change considerations"*.

Here, again, the need for prioritisation in council management structure is identified where *"climate change considerations should have greater prominence in guidance on member and senior officer roles within local government"* and *"greater clarity and focus of political will on this matter would enable local authorities to focus and direct efforts where they can have the greatest impact"*.

2.1.4 Private bodies and businesses

"Related to finance is cost and resource efficiency. This is amplified in local government by the asset management agenda. The impact of the Gershon agenda is being felt in local and central government, and both the health and university sectors are under pressure to use resources more effectively".

"There is a fear that energy costs will divert funds away from the local authority's core activities, compromising front-line services".

2.2 What are the main barriers and constraints to councils tackling climate change more effectively? How can they be dismantled?

2.2.1 Councils' views on barriers and constraints

Support and engagement

A consistent message is that a *"main barrier is lack of political support and specific requirements or targets"*. A few councils identify that they have encountered *"opposition from councillor's that climate change isn't caused by human activities"*, where this barrier is not helped by the *"recent Channel 4 TV programme and other ill-informed press coverage still leads many people, including local policy makers (some elected members and senior officers), to choose to believe that climate change is not a real threat"*. Others complain of a *"lack of understanding from executive management and councillors"* with one council suggesting that training courses were *"required for members and other officers (for example dealing with LAA) and not for sustainability practitioners"*.

At least one respondent identifies that the *"Regional Development Agency has not been proactive or supportive enough. If a project does not directly generate jobs they will not support it, so very few climate change initiatives achieve RDA support"*.

There is a consistent view that perhaps *"most important of all is the lack of any statutory duty on the authority to tackle climate change both in the CPA process and in the LAA"*.

Establishing priorities

As well as the need to establish climate change as a priority within the council as a whole, the issue of establishing the right priorities for action and embedding climate change across a number of strategic aspects of the council's activities is also identified. Here many respondents highlight that *"climate change is seen as an environmental not corporate issue; leading to marginalisation"* where a *"real barrier is probably an understanding of what the climate change agenda in a local authority context is all about"*.

Views are that generally climate change (and sustainability in general) *"must be seen as an issue which has to be incorporated into all other management systems and not a separate discipline which requires to be managed differently"*. One of the barriers identified *"is simply the diversity of the activities required to effectively tackle climate change. For mitigation a council would need to:*

- *reduce carbon from its own estate,*
- *implement sustainable procurement policies,*
- *influence the Building Schools for the Future programme,*
- *improve energy efficiency in social housing,*
- *promote energy efficiency and renewables to private householders,*
- *develop positive planning policies,*
- *implement sustainable transport schemes,*
- *improve recycling and composting rates,*
- *encourage green business,*
- *and the list goes on"*.

In addition, *"dealing with adaptation brings in a whole new list of service areas to influence, from emergency planning (including fire, police and health authorities) to road maintenance and gritting, grass cutting regimes to planning, biodiversity to flood risk"*.

Here a number of councils judge that *"there is little understanding of how activities should be prioritised, and what the cost/carbon reduction ratio is, and whether there can be win-win benefits"*. The issue requires that there is *"good co-ordination with input from services across the council and the ability to influence organisations at a senior level outside the council"*. However, a few councils note that this is not helped by the fact that *"there is a plethora of documents that need to be referenced to get an overview of the entire agenda"*.

In terms of addressing such issues, a consistent theme is that there is a need to *"make climate change a priority: at present there are no requirements for local authority level strategies and programmes, no statutory requirements, and no performance objectives for climate change"* and *"promote mechanisms which support cross cutting approach eg cross-cutting cabinet portfolios in local government"*. Such steps may help to address barriers such as *"short-termism: approaching climate change as a long-term issue which does not require immediate action, short term political expediency"* and competing *"priorities, including responding to other, longer established, central and local government agendas"*. Here, *"mitigating action could be to undertake a carbon audit of all council contracts and suppliers. Procurement department could try to review the impact of initiatives in respect to carbon reduction"*.

A clear message also seems to be that *"there is a need to bring the total agenda together into some kind of consistent framework so that 400 organisations do not have to reinvent the solution. We already have a number of guides on "How to do climate change" in a local authority, but we are not able to assess how well we are doing. If we only knew that we were addressing 60 or 70 per cent of the agenda, we might be better predisposed to reassigning the existing staff pool to the highest priorities or adding the additional resource required"*.

Sphere of influence

A number of councils identify barriers relating to their sphere of influence. A typical example is that *"barriers also arise if a council leases buildings and if it owns buildings, but no longer has responsibility for them. A good example of this latter point is schools"*.

This issue in relation to schools is raised by a number of respondents with the general view that *"without carbon dioxide reduction targets, schools can too easily make the choice of, for example, procuring the cheapest electricity rather than from a renewable source, affecting any carbon dioxide targets set by the council or central government"*.

In terms of solutions to this specific issue, *"the Department for Education and Skills must therefore be prepared to give local authorities the power to mandate schools involvement or to impose carbon dioxide reduction targets on schools through other means"* and there is a need to *"build climate change into DfES policy and programmes affecting schools: eg higher requirements in Building Schools for the Future programme"*.

Several councils identify that *"transport is still a major barrier and councils don't have the necessary powers to tackle the real transport issues (increasing car ownership and use, 4 wheel drives, etc)"*. Here *"public opinion will in some cases be a barrier – for example one method of reducing emissions is to force people by whatever means not to use cars but to use public transport. In some cases this will be immediately acceptable to a large majority, whereas in others it will not. Local authorities will tend to choose the programmes where maximum gain is achieved for minimum pain"*.

Returning to schools, one respondent identifies *"inconsistent messages from central government eg DfES policies to further increase educational choice conflict with travel emission reduction objectives"*.

Many councils complain of *“developers not wanting to adhere to climate change requirements – insufficient commitment”* and the need to *“involve developers in climate change partnerships”* or *“financial incentives are a further option. Offering incentives to building contractors to adopt green methods, or to the public when making home improvements will only boost environmental actions (eg 5 per cent VAT on home improvements)”*.

Several councils identify that one of the main limitations to *“carbon management is largely the current extent and condition of the council’s estate, historical planning and management of the property portfolio and investment in energy efficiency improvements”*.

One or more councils complain about their own vehicle fleets and the 5 per cent limit on bio-diesel blended into the diesel owing to vehicle manufacturers’ guarantees only allowing a maximum of 5 per cent; *“much higher percentages are known to be safe – elsewhere in Europe a 20 per cent limit is commonplace. The government should press manufacturers to allow at least 20 per cent bio-diesel to be used in UK diesel vehicles”*.

Funding and resources

The issue of a lack of statutory requirements and targets backed up by funding is one that is virtually unanimous. However, the issue of *“the on-off nature of funding and eligibility criteria for energy efficiency and micro-renewable measures are real barriers to achievement in carbon reductions in the domestic sector”* is frequently raised. Here, *“renewables funding is also somewhat erratic and insubstantial. Originally available under the Clear Skies and Solar PV programmes and now amalgamated under the Low Carbon Buildings Programme the levels of grant funding are still not adequate to encourage greater uptake by either the domestic or business sectors”*.

Other comments include that *“the energy companies have currently met their Ofgem targets under EEC2, and are no longer releasing monies for the domestic sector, causing immense problems for local projects that were already underway and using this source of funding”*.

In addition to the ‘erratic’ nature of the funding, criteria governing funds is seen to be a barrier. *“Warm Front, the government’s main grant-funded programme, is available only for households meeting certain criteria. This can miss out a huge sector of the population which is neither ‘rich enough’ to pay for energy efficiency measures themselves, or ‘poor enough’ to meet the criteria for grants. This sector may also be the part of the population most likely to possess the motivation to take action if they were encouraged”*. In addition, *“neither of these grants schemes has helped some of the worst housing stock in the UK because the criteria have never covered the truly hard to heat homes, ie those properties with solid walls that require external or internal thermal insulation as opposed to cavity wall insulation, including the increasingly popular residential park homes”*.

In terms of take up of grants, it is interesting to note that *“Herefordshire Council Private Sector Housing department found that when they ran their Special Energy Efficiency Scheme, the addition of a further £1,000 to add to the then £400 available under Clear Skies, and the availability of an interest free loan, made a considerable difference to take-up of the installation of solar thermal”*.

Without visible long-term benefits, improvements to current planning legislation and the sort of financial incentives available in other EU countries, significant take up of micro-renewables will remain at ‘demonstration’ level in the UK. Solid commitment from government is also essential for the renewables industry if their investment is to continue, to enable costs to be reduced and take-up increased.

A common issue raised by councils (and others) is the need to engage longer-term factors in financial accountancy. Here, *“the Stern Report gave tackling climate change its economic credentials. However, the*

view was relatively long-term and councils may be unwilling to impose measures that carry a short term economic cost that will deliver long term benefits that are realised under a potentially different administration. Actions that save councils money in the short term are therefore likely to be popular. Where this is not possible, greater clarity on life cycle analysis of costs should be incorporated into procurement decisions". Needs identified include "clear and regularly updated guidance for local authorities on costs and benefits including whole-life costs and stable funding regimes which support carbon reduction and adaptation measures" and that "local authorities need to be given a specific climate change mitigation and adaptation budget". Other suggestions are that "the benefits illustrated in other terms than CO₂ reduction, eg impacts on health, employment, environmental, ££".

One or more councils report having encountered problems with allocation of costs and benefits. For example, in relation to schools "serious problems on invest to save. Despite BREEAM Assessments, energy efficiency and renewable measures cost money up front, that can be saved in the long term but there is no willingness/ability to spend the additional money in advance. (Also problems where the council pays for measures which an individual school's budget will benefit from longer term)".

Data and uncertainties

Some councils reflect on "uncertainty, and lack of hard data and information particularly about adaptation risks and costs". Some councils complain of "no accurate data to set baseline and develop from a realistic point" and "until we have a carbon footprint baseline for our current environment and activities we cannot measure our successes or failures".

2.2.2 Other government and local government organisations

Some of the issues raised by councils are neatly summarised by the response from the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) which, though principally relating to adaptation, also applies to mitigation. "Currently, the main barriers tend to be the lack of drivers. Most drivers of council activities are short-term in comparison to the longer horizons of adaptation planning and local authority actions on climate change have tended to focus almost exclusively on mitigation to date.

- Budget cycle (1 year)
- Electoral cycle (4 years)

Climate change adaptation is not explicitly included in current Best Value or CPA frameworks – inclusion of an adaptation indicator in the new Performance Framework is vital in overcoming this barrier.

Even the timescales of Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and other strategic plans may be short in comparison to the impacts of a changing climate on the outcomes.

Low priority and lack of resources for undertaking action (drawing up strategies and plans), often even when a council has signalled its concern by signing the Nottingham Declaration.

Lack of awareness – to date most policy responses to climate change have focussed on mitigation. Adaptation has only recently begun to come more to the fore and as yet few resources have been devoted to raising awareness. Adaptation to climate change is a new field, so there is little past experience or examples of 'good' practice to build on. This extends to a dearth of availability of consultancy support and, generally, a lack of relevant experience amongst contractors and professional services, such as architects".

¹ It can be difficult to apply the concept of 'good' (or 'best') practice to climate change adaptation because of the long time scales, intermittency of extreme events, and uncertainties involved and the location-specific nature of some adaptation responses.

Other responses add the issue that *"there is already a lot of work detailing the consequences of climate change, but this tends to be scientific and is not easy to access by local government. Additional support is needed for local authorities to enable them to access the guidance they need and to focus on that which is relevant and useful as opposed to that which is just interesting"*. To this end *"an online resource for local authorities to provide access to service specific information and guidance on climate change matters would be of significant value in assisting the formulation of service responses to climate change, both adaptation and mitigation"*. Combined with some of the responses from councils on the difficulty of being presented with *"a plethora"* of information, it seems sensible to suggest that the objective here would be a 'one stop shop' for such information.

2.2.3 Pressure and interest groups

Comments from pressure and interest groups identify similar issues concerning the fact that *"there has been no concerted effort to pass down regional and local targets for action in the medium or short term"*.

In terms of timescales, *"it is evident that few local authorities can work out which trade-offs to make or priorities to set for such a long term goal, and the default has been for little or no action to be taken. It is also evident that such a long term goal can never be a political priority because the measurement of success is so far past the end of the term of power of the people being required to act"*.

In terms of baseline data, one respondent recommends that *"even if the Defra methods are imperfect, that they be used for the present as the real values, and local authorities encouraged to adopt them and set targets from them. Later modifications to the method can be compensated for in targets set based upon them"*.

In addition *"a body needs to be established to ensure that best practice is spread between local authorities so that change is made efficiently and mistakes are not repeated"* and *"there certainly needs to be coordination of efforts – perhaps there even needs to be an internal carbon market to allow areas that are not able to cut emissions to pay other areas that are more able to do so"*.

2.2.4 Private bodies and businesses

Many of the issues identified by councils are echoed in responses from this group including that *"the best way of making councils take action is for government to require them to achieve specific performance indicator(s) on carbon emission saving. This should be followed by adequate resources to enable councils to tackle this new task"*.

Also identified are inconsistencies in government policy. *"Several councils are taking action by seeking to set energy efficiency targets for new residential buildings in their emerging spatial strategies. However, Communities and Local Government (CLG) has changed its planning policies recently to expressly prevent this from happening"*.

In terms of energy efficiency, *"energy management is not a strategic issue and therefore it does not always get the necessary management attention and resource. Coupled to this, energy efficiency projects tend to be scattered around the organisation. This means that the energy manager is fighting a number of small battles to get the projects implemented"*. *"An under-resourced energy management team is a huge barrier to investing in energy efficiency. Co-ordinating the procurement of projects is complex and resource intensive"*.

Barriers identified include:

“Lack of people – there is a chronic lack of energy managers in local government, mainly through retirement and the attraction of the private sector through better remuneration packages. Also, as public policy on climate change begins to bite, more demands are being made of existing energy managers resulting in them being seriously overstretched;

Lack of money – capital budgets are under severe pressure and it is difficult for councils to obtain financing internally in competition with core activities. Furthermore, “spend to save” third party funding is often the only way marginal projects can be supported;

Accounting barriers – mobilising the necessary resources can be difficult due to barriers that prevent revenue budgets being used to pay back capital investment in energy efficiency; and

Lack of information – energy managers are faced with a lot of third party information available but it is difficult to identify that which is relevant and authoritative. They also tend not to have the right skills to implement projects, for example with procurement and finance”.

Planning policy and practice

“The biggest barrier to some renewable technologies is the planning system, and there is a substantial gap between the varying high level policies of sustainability adopted by local authorities and the everyday decisions made by their planning departments and councillors”.

In the recent past, around 30 per cent of renewable planning applications were refused. This is worse in some key technologies...even humble domestic solar installations can fall foul of the system; installers say that some councils insist on the requirement of planning permission, even when this is not really necessary as the installation should be permitted development. According to Southern Solar, a leading installer of solar thermal in the South East, around 20 per cent of householders give up the idea of installing solar when faced with the effort and cost of a planning application.

The government has declared that it will shortly publish its Permitted Development guidelines for microgeneration technologies...However, some micro-generation technologies will end up in the planning system because they are planning matters that cannot be covered by permitted development rights. Some technologies can be intrusive (such as micro-wind turbines) while some, such as solar panels, can change the appearance of a building. Or it may be that the application is so large that it is disputable how “micro” an installation really is.

In addition, permitted development rights are to a certain degree in abeyance in conservation areas, which cover a surprising large part of urban Britain. These areas, with their varying and subjective standards on “visual impact”, are a particular barrier to wind and solar technologies.

There are exceptions to the above. Several advanced local planning authorities² have adopted, or are in the process of adopting, a Supplementary Planning Document containing guidance on renewable energy (either as a stand alone policy or as part of a wider sustainability SPD) to help them make planning decisions and to advise householders and businesses on what is accepted and why. This process should be encouraged, and the Local Government Association should be congratulated on its guide to developing a local sustainable development policy which includes sections on renewables, Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and energy efficiency”.

“Delivery of Article 4 of the EU Directive on energy performance of buildings in the UK is mainly through revised Building Regulations (April 2006). However, there is evidence that building control is not enforcing the relevant parts of the regulations and irresponsible builders have been able to get away with flouting

² Examples include Lewes and Croydon.

minimum energy and emission standards. Surveys have shown that one in two new houses currently fail to meet the current Part L standards” .

2.2.5 Regional bodies

“Local authorities in the present climate tend to be, understandably, inspection driven. The lack of any statutory duty under both inspection (CPA) or LAA has relegated climate change allowing priority to be given to other, statutory, duties” .

“It tends, however, to be down to the action of committed individuals as an addendum to their normal workload, rather than coherent and strategic policy” .

“Addressing climate change may well mean an ‘invest to save’ approach. This poses problems to local authorities as, despite long term savings being identified, they have difficulty allocating the funding ‘up front’” .

2.3 A number of councils are leading the way in tackling climate change – what are the key success factors? What is inhibiting success in other councils?

2.3.1 Councils’ views

Leadership and awareness

The strongest message in the responses is that a key factor governing success is “**individual leadership, or lack of it**. This is related to lack of capacity, financial pressures and also lack of an obvious “lead” service for climate change in many authorities. Until very recently there has been limited political interest”. In addition, “success from those councils leading on climate often comes down to a ‘wilful individual’ rather any particular policy or commitment of an authority” .

Other responses widen the role of the individual to the existence of “influential champion(s) – even if a local authority does have a dedicated sustainability team, there is a need for influential champions throughout the authority at elected member and officer level with the power to implement change in their own departments” .

Here factors inhibiting success include “the scepticism about climate change that still remains in the public at large may be reflected in both members and senior decision makers. Other barriers include higher priority drivers, the idea that climate change is a “not-for-now” future issue, the potential breadth of the agenda, the need for resourcing in a tightening financial climate and the idea that it is an add-on to the “day job” all surface as success blockers” . Consequently, “those councils which appear more able to deliver climate change action are those where the ‘golden thread’ of issues management is most effectively embedded” .

Successes in respect of leadership and management buy-in are also put down to:

“having environment policy/strategy as a corporate driver” ;

“increasing public awareness, leading (slowly) to greater political commitment” ; and

“promotion of the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change” .

One novel means of stimulating public engagement includes “we have created a local version of “An inconvenient truth for Peterborough”, a professional yet locally produced series of podcasts to publicise the effects of climate change locally. It addresses many local issues and opportunities for action and is produced in co-operation with local organisations and partners” .

Risk taking

Some responses identify a “lack of appetite for the perceived risk of being involved with a ‘new’ area where there are ‘uncertainties’ – waiting to follow others who set out an easily-followed path” and a “fear of failure”.

Existing mechanisms/efforts

Strong engagement in sustainable development and associated issues (for example through LA21) also seems to be a springboard for activity and success. A number of councils identify success factors including:

- “long term political and corporate support for the environmental agenda”;
- “active Local Agenda 21 group of dedicated and engaged citizens”;
- a long-term “regeneration strategy which seeks to both provide good, efficient public transport links to where people work but also to try to stimulate the local economy so that people can work nearby”;
- “existence of mature environmental strategy for the council, including effective delivery mechanisms”;
- “existence of a practical sustainability strategy for the community, ideally based on LA21”.

Prioritisation

A number of councils identify the importance of “developing a strategic framework within which to operate and a carbon journey to follow”.

A number of respondents provide advice on achieving successes, where this includes:

“Learning to walk before you can run – a limited step-by-step approach based on annual action plans”.

“Do not try to do everything. Identify boundaries based on control and influence, and remain within them. Staying focussed”.

“Quick wins – choose initial actions that are visible, produce benefits quickly and are valued by members and officers. This can be as simple as switching to a renewable source of energy for the local authority and undertaking a full energy audit of all buildings to ascertain baseline energy use and enable CO₂ reduction target setting;”

“Success breeds success – a number of local authorities have already started with small-scale measures particularly in the renewables field to build technical know-how and confidence. Follow their examples. However, beware the danger of continual use of feasibility studies and small-scale demonstration models. There is a need to move forwards with ‘full scale’ installations”;

“Shared experience – talk to other local authorities and NGO networks. Each local authority tackles the issues in different ways and with different emphasis. Learn from each other”;

“Consistent long term commitment – is essential within the local authority”;

“Local partnership working – the key to tackling climate change impacts community wide is to strengthen links and work with the local organisations that can deliver practical benefits to communities”; and

“Handholding/mentoring – handholding for individuals and community groups works far more effectively than advice from a distance and use of generic reports as a result of questionnaires, which will be of help to those individuals who are open to change, but not for those who are not interested. Mentoring smaller local authorities is also a good way of tackling climate change in the wider community. Shropshire County Council has been mentoring a district council through the IDeA Beacons Peer Support Programme”.

One response adds (what could in some ways be read as a caveat) that *“even top performing councils generally perform very well in one area (i.e. internal carbon reduction, renewable energy policies, domestic energy efficiency) and have built their reputation for dealing with climate change on this alone”*. Also, that perhaps success may be down having *“fewer competing demands”*.

At least one respondent identified that *“the development of Beacon and/or a recognition standard that organisations can work towards would assist in promoting both sustainability for the supplier and buyer”*.

Accounting timescales

“Councils which assess projects under Whole Life Cost terms will see benefits of certain investments more easily and quickly than councils where capital costs are artificially separated from the running costs”.

Partnership/funding

A number of councils stress the importance of partnership approaches. For example, *“funded by the Islington Strategic Partnership (our LSP), the Climate Change Partnership consists of 40 organisations including law firms, taxi companies, universities, shops, housing associations, restaurants and pubs as well as the council itself. Organisations joining the Partnership commit to reducing their carbon emissions by 15 per cent by 2010 through a variety of measures including efficiency improvements, behavioural change and renewables projects. The Partnership provides them with support to be able to implement changes. Elected members are very supportive of the Partnership and this has been crucial in terms of giving it the priority it needs”*.

In addition, others identify that *“the support of organisations such as Community Energy Solutions; Energy Saving Trust and Carbon Trust have been extremely valuable”*.

In addition to partnerships with 'external' bodies *“local authorities can also achieve more success by working internally with their own services that otherwise would not make the link to climate change, for example, Trading Standards and library services which can help promote awareness campaigns, etc.”*

Other successes, partnerships, and funding have been achieved by:

- *“innovative use of funding mechanisms and the creation of its own energy services company and joint venture energy services company”*;
- *“successful funding bids to deliver high profile projects”*;
- *“Carbon Trust’s Local Authority Carbon Management Programme”*;
- *“community wide climate change partnership and action plan, built on a solid foundation of extensive consultation”*; and
- *“selective use of experienced consultants”*.

One respondent points out that *“support for sub-regional action such as this from RDA’s would help local authorities in achieving successful sub-regional action”*.

2.3.2 Other government and local government organisations

Additional comments and thoughts on reasons for success or otherwise include:

- *“The ability to acquire and utilise expertise”*;
- *“Access to effective networks, local, regional and national”*;
- *“Lack of legislative clout is inhibiting progress in many councils. Mandatory CO₂ emission reduction targets should be set for both own estate and the community”*; and
- *“More needs to be done to establish best practice in tackling emissions from transport”*.

2.3.3 Pressure and interest groups

"Knowledge and innovation vs. inertia and old thinking. The vision to invest in new technology that not only will save money, but will save carbon too. Too often party political dogma clouds decision making when it comes to the environment".

2.3.4 Private bodies and businesses

"Evidence from our local authority clients shows that in addition to providing finance, it is the fact that a fund has to be set up that drives investment and change in the local authority. With our support individual energy efficiency projects are brought together into a fund that has the critical mass needed to attract board and cabinet attention. Energy managers tell us that this allows them to establish themselves in the organisation and in time to attract resources and funding from elsewhere".

2.4 Given constraints on resources, what are the most and least productive areas for council action and what are the implications for more effective action?

2.4.1 Councils' views on most productive areas

Transport and transport planning

"Travel and transport: a key source of greenhouse gas emissions, where authorities have strong influence through Local Transport Plans".

"Most challenging area is addressing sustainable transport in a rural area".

"Planning: wide influence on travel and patterns, and energy: but much stronger national guidance is required".

Planning and construction

"Construction: mitigation and adaptation issues

"A few exemplar building projects"

"Local authorities are in the fortuitous position of being able to make policy which has no, or only marginal impact on their resources – for example in the planning process we can make requirements of developers which might impact on building costs. Economists advise that over time the impact will solely be on land values".

"Housing (existing housing through large-scale energy efficiency programmes and new housing through stringent planning policies and planning gain)".

"Large scale, ambitious master planning (eg community heating networks, transport planning or strategic flood alleviation – effectively dealing with climate change can often only be achieved by strategically planning at a community scale and local authorities are the only bodies, often working at the city region or sub-regional scale, who can effectively do this)".

"Adaptation (failing to consider the impacts of climate change when taking long-term decisions will be felt locally, so this is the area that has most potential to improve the resilience of an area to future climate shocks)".

Energy efficiency

"Energy efficiency is still the most cost effective (though the least 'sexy')".

"Any initiative needs to be easy to replicate and perceived as 'normal' (eg our sustainable office building)".

"Some investment initiatives (especially around energy saving) are self financing. The period of repayment will vary according to initiative".

"Look across the district at the domestic sector as this is where the largest percentage of emissions occur, partner with organisations".

"Ring fencing of in-house savings".

Procurement

"Purchasing: embodied energy, usage of IT and appliances, freight impacts"

Find 'win-win' solutions

"Project to collect kitchen and green waste and convert it via anaerobic digestion to vehicle fuel. This has the multiple benefit of dealing with this difficult waste, reducing landfill and reducing carbon emissions. It is however costly both to collect and then to process".

"We could do much more on reducing business mileage through new ways of working, using telephone and video conferencing".

Scale

"The most effective area for council action was in starting with small scale projects that were achievable within the council's own estate. Once the authority's own estate and services are in order, there is an effective foundation and knowledge established for exploring other areas for action in the wider community".

Leadership, partnership and consultation

"Community leadership: a key issue for members. Local authorities can take a lead in stimulating local interest, awareness and promoting and supporting action".

"Board level display of commitment ie signing the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change".

"Do some research on attitudes/expectations to inform strategic approach - Our research with the public can be summed up in the statement "Don't keep telling us about the problem of climate change - tell us what to do!"

"Work cross sector within the local authority, pool resources and ideas".

"Education – all age groups over a long period, to gain societal acceptability".

"A suggestion for the introduction of an EMS across the authority has been proposed. This would focus on implementing energy and resource efficiency measures by concentrating on operational processes and by addressing the behavioural characteristics of employees everyday activities through the introduction of management procedures, the education of council staff and the formation of information sources to attain the goal of reduced energy and resource consumption".

Prioritisation

"Recognising/identifying what is already being done in the name of climate change and not repeating/duplicating that work".

"Do the planning – do not be swept into the stream of "we need to do something (anything) now!" Once you have identified your carbon footprint you are better placed to identify actions that give the most economic return rather than following the latest "green" initiative the media are focussing on".

"With regard to climate change adaptation the most productive area would be to address this through its own services identifying those which are particularly climate sensitive. Equally the council is well placed and has an important role in drawing together partners to address climate change adaptation across the county".

"Strategy and partnership (climate change is still not being picked up effectively in new strategies and the most effective way to galvanise action is to link to core strategies and strategic agreements such as LAAs)".

Recycling

Recycling is identified by a few councils as a productive area (owing to legal requirements). However, waste and recycling is also identified by others as being one of the least productive areas in terms of impact (see below).

2.4.2 Councils' views on least productive areas

"Municipal waste (waste has a surprisingly low carbon equivalent content and is already being covered by the landfill directive and Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS). The only exception is strategic planning for energy from waste vs recycling and anaerobic digestion/pyrolysis)".

"Expensive renewables such as photovoltaics are least productive, although people love the idea".

"Dealing with individual queries and advice, which is unlikely to be an effective use of resources".

"Industry (these are governed by national and international markets and mechanisms and are therefore outside the influence of local authorities)".

"Attempted demonstrations of some untried technologies eg fuel cells; trial of natural gas as vehicle fuel".

"Single issue arguments and policies that fail to see the cross cutting implications".

"We consider the least productive areas to be telephone helplines, generic reports based on questionnaires, conferences and videos".

"Least productive areas (to date) for many councils have been efforts to make council's own operations more environmentally friendly due to various factors including old buildings limiting energy saving options, ageing vehicle fleets and resistance on part of officers to change some working practices".

"Larger scale projects that are more difficult to win the support of the public and are much longer term in their scope and potential delivery. For instance, waste project, wind turbines".

2.4.3 Other government and local government organisations

Most productive

"To invest in more professional level collaboration on climate change matters and this needs to be able to access different professional groupings on climate change as well as looking for opportunities for joint learning and research".

"Ensuring climate change, and potential mitigation and adaptation strategies, is a key area for discussion within Local Strategic Partnerships, thereby maximising buy-in from a wide range of partners towards combative action".

"Embedding climate change as a key priority in Sustainable Community Strategies and associated delivery structures, including Local Development Frameworks and Local Area Agreements, and their associated performance and reporting frameworks".

"Providing leadership through things like public sector procurement, construction and development programmes eg biomass boilers in schools, zero-carbon housing, well-wooded parks and public spaces to reduce energy use etc".

"Pinpointing a senior level 'climate change champion' to ensure that all local authority activities are 'climate change proofed' and that new ideas are brought forward and developed".

"Raising awareness and activism within local communities through local environmental action (eg tree planting) and building their capacity and confidence to take direct action on climate change issues in their local area".

Least productive

"Authorities working in isolation on climate change matters and duplicating activity for small areas and with low levels of influence".

Notes in relation to adaptation

"Undertake Local Climate Impacts Profile, or similar process, to identify current local climate and weather impacts and vulnerabilities".

"Undertake an assessment of changing climate risks to council operations and service delivery in order to establish priorities for adaptation actions".

"Undertake an assessment of changing climate risks to their policy, plans and programmes in order to identify issues for delivering policy objectives in a changing climate".

"Develop an adaptation strategy/plan based on the above".

"The eventual objective of good adaptation is to embed the consideration of changing climate risks into all the council's operations".

2.4.4 Pressure and interest groups

"Scrapping building new road schemes that cost half a billion pounds (and no doubt high carbon emissions too) is a no brainer. Encouraging the development of travel plans for businesses and schools that avoid car journeys is the best way to reduce congestion. After all, how many traffic jams disappear during school holidays?"

“Decentralised/regional offices or the provision of hot desking/conference facilities could reduce the need to travel. Encouraging more flexible working from home and work hours to lessen the impact of peak hour travel”.

“Carry out aerial thermal photographic surveys to determine inefficient buildings which require additional insulation or other modification and target owners to carry out improvements. Encouraging by measuring and monitoring and awarding public transport benefits as a reward (eg free bus travel vouchers?)”.

2.4.5 Private bodies and businesses

Most productive

“The councils who are interested in energy usually started because they wanted to save money on their own energy bills. Then they acquired the expertise and funds to do so and then gradually they began to realise they could do things which would help people in their area, often at no cost to the local authority itself”.

“Councils should concentrate their efforts on retaining their existing energy managers, providing them with the necessary support to avoid them being completely overstretched and providing competitive packages to attract new energy managers. A useful rule of thumb is that there should be around ~ one FTE energy manager for every £1m of energy spend. Given that a local authority could save 10 per cent of its energy spend in the first year or so on a Salix fund, investing in an energy manager makes sense because the investment pays off quickly”.

“The rating and bold public display of energy certificates on public buildings, when combined with engaging communication strategies and events, is an excellent means to raise awareness and demonstrate how residential energy users can make a difference. This is particularly true in schools, where students can see improvements to their own building, make changes in their own behaviour, and take these lessons home to influence energy used in the household. The European Display™ Campaign is a voluntary scheme designed by energy experts from 20 European towns and cities and supported by ACE’s research department. It is aimed at encouraging local authorities to publicly display the energy and environmental performances of their public buildings using the same energy label that is used for household appliances.”

Following on from the success of the Display Campaign, ACE urges the government to implement as soon as possible Article 7 of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, which requires all public buildings over 1000 square metres to display an energy performance certificate. Furthermore, we would wish to see an early extension of the directive to cover not just publicly owned buildings, but all buildings visited by the public, eg theatres, supermarkets, banks, sports facilities, etc.”

2.4.6 Regional bodies

Those additional to the above include:

Most productive

“Through the ‘least exciting’, energy savings at citizen level by promoting the benefits (financial) of insulating lofts and wall cavities and switching to low energy light bulbs”.

“work with businesses in the community relating impacts of and adaptation to climate change to business continuity, risk management and opportunity”.

Least productive

“Trying to persuade citizens to invest unrealistically in large scale renewable energy take-up (eg installation of wind turbines to single houses)”.

“Investing in studies that are there for show and not to supply the evidence base for change”.

2.5 How can councils work in partnership in their local areas more effectively?

2.5.1 Councils' views

A general view is that *"it is essential to work through existing structures and groups (eg LSPs, Chambers of Commerce, third sector fora, etc) in order to get buy-in for climate change embedded in major plans and strategies for the area and to secure senior support from local organisations"*.

A collated list of 'tips' is as follows:

- *"engage with key organisations - eg, PCTs, NHS, large industry/employers/education and training establishments"*;
- *"link with the local strategic partnership"*;
- *"market their own success and share best practice"*;
- *"keep abreast of the local agenda"*;
- *"collaborate with neighbouring local authorities to deliver common goals. Focus is given to this under the LAAs as part of the local government white paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'"*;
- *"work with partners in the private sector to deliver common goals"*;
- *"utilise the local energy efficiency advice centre"*;
- *"utilise ready-made network groups eg HECA, LGA, etc"*;
- *"pooling of funding"*;
- *"joint funding applications"*;
- *"use of ICLEI/CCP networks to share experience of other municipalities in Europe and across the world"*;
- *"ensure that sustainability principles are taken fully into account"*;
- *"common targets across the sub-region"*;
- *"sharing information openly between all partners"*;
- *"working to clear common objectives"*;
- *"ensuring clear assignment of responsibilities for key tasks"*;
- *"employing community council networks to help raise awareness throughout the community"*;
- *"using media effectively, celebrating and reinforcing the partnership"*;
- *"encouraging and facilitating voluntary sector involvement"*;
- *"climate change must be made relevant to the individuals and organisations that any local authority wants to work in partnership with"*; and
- *"use economic regeneration influence to encourage involvement of private sector organisations"*.

LAA and LSP

There are a number of comments on the effective use of LAAs and LSP structures.

"Partnership on climate change should be focussed through the LAA, and LSPs. However, there is a risk that increasing the emphasis on the importance of local priorities driving the LAA may work against strengthening climate change. It is unlikely that community concerns will drive climate change, as more immediate and local issues are likely to predominate".

"It is notable that many of the areas covered by the LAA require statutory partnerships or plans eg crime and disorder, learning and skills. There is nothing comparable for climate change or environment. There is a need to build local and organisational capacity on environmental and climate change issues including in partner organisations eg Environment Agency, and at regional level".

"There is a need to drive action on climate change through LSPs and there should be a drive to ensure LSP partners where possible have a duty to co-operate with local authorities in reducing emissions of partner organisations and the locality".

“The creation of a local strategic partnership produces a wide community agenda, a large audience but attracts little funding and has limited business/commercial focus. The work is done by the strategic lead authority and is usually integrated into the aims and objectives of that authority. Without a realistic funding settlement to deliver partnership goals little happens - you have a network rather than a partnership”.

Engaging households

A number of councils comment on the difficulties and importance of influencing households, particularly in relation to energy efficiency.

“Help for the domestic sector has been delivered by the Energy Saving Trust through its Energy Efficiency Advice Centres (EEACs). The EEACs have provided a telephone advice line, followed up by the use of HECs (Home Energy Checklist). However, this relies on the general public knowing about the service and making the first contact either by phone or at an event.

Despite this long term funding, the scheme has not had the level of behavioural change that is required to make the urgent and necessary progress in carbon dioxide reduction.

Defra and the EST now need to develop new relationships with local authorities so that bespoke local solutions can be found.

A far more effective use would be to focus on funding to local authorities, allowing them to work with local partnerships to pool budgets and innovation, in order to deliver whole community aims and targets to tackle climate change, rather than top down national and regional solutions. This would not just be looking at domestic energy conservation, but community buildings, businesses, transport, local food production etc.”

“Islington is utilising direct relationship with households through council tax system. It is giving residents who pay their CT by direct debit the opportunity to donate their £20 discount to its unique Climate Change Fund”.

2.5.2 Other government and local government organisations

“By developing and empowering local or sub-regional ‘climate change partnerships’ within their wider Local Strategic Partnership framework and commissioning them to develop a long-term strategy and programme to address mitigation and adaptation through both direct action and behavioural change”.

“By considering ‘Multi-Agency Agreements’ on climate change, tackling the issue across wider areas than just single local authorities”.

2.5.3 Pressure and interest groups

“Local councillors are not best placed to innovate and deploy new thinking. There are a number of local environmental groups who would be happy to work with the council and its officers to develop new ideas. Many new ideas will come from best practice across the UK, or Europe, but the creation of environmental focus groups to help evaluate ideas may be worthwhile”.

2.5.4 Private bodies and businesses

Energy efficiency commitment

“Many householders can’t believe that a utility which exists to make profits out of selling units of electricity or gas would actually subsidise energy saving measures that cut fuel bills. In contrast to the energy suppliers, surveys have shown that written statements from local authorities are considered to be more trustworthy and

official letters are read. For this reason, joint promotion schemes of EEC installations have been very successful”.

“One promotion has been of a council tax reduction for householders installing energy-saving measures. This measure has attracted widespread support – including from many local authorities. With support from EST’s Innovation programme, Fenland District Council is offering council tax rebates to households that install energy efficiency measures. In other places Centrica is offering to split the cost of the rebate with councils as part of its EEC promotion”.

Energy Service Companies (ESCOs)

“Ultimately, if the government continues to enforce energy savings from the utilities using “cap and trade”, the energy suppliers should move to being ESCOs (energy services companies) in alliance with councils, and providing for each household levels of warmth and ability to power an agreed number of appliances. Unlike today, where a customer is just a number on a computer file, and the relationship purely transactional, ESCOs, to provide their services adequately, will have to know their customers, their lifestyles and the state of their property. It will be cheaper for the ESCO, after a certain point, to avoid expensive investment in increasing energy generation by helping their customers reduce demand. This has happened in California where utilities have provided low-cost solar panels for customers at the edge of their distribution network, rather than build a new power station. An example of an ESCO produced in alliance with local government is the London ESCO contract, won by EDF and backed by the London Mayor”.

Building partnerships

“eaga plc can help councils in a local area work together more effectively through our network of Partnership Development Officers (PDOs). Warm Front targets vulnerable residential communities in private housing stock, and the energy-efficient thermal comfort of vulnerable households and communities achieved via Warm Front referral generation projects thus creates a previously unconnected local authority network that mitigates climate change and tackles Fuel Poverty. By networking in this way eaga plc PDO’s work with and effectively pull together not only a range of local authorities, but also a range of local authority services that otherwise may not be directly involved in overarching Climate Change Strategies”.

“From a Salix perspective, we see scope for district councils to manage projects and funding collectively for smaller councils in their area. This is because it is not always economically viable for parish councils to apply for our funding due to their small size. We have also found that some of our higher education clients have partnered with their local hospitals to tackle energy efficiency leading to significant economies of scale. We believe there is potential for councils to replicate such initiatives with institutions in their local area. Initiatives such as the Core Cities Group could be used to share best practice”.

2.5.5 Regional bodies

“Through participation in Climate Change Partnership organised at regional level but aimed at action at the local level”.

“Through the LAA process, setting specific stretching targets to tackle mitigation and adaptation”.

“There is a need to ensure consistency of targets for councils within a geographic area, since a challenging target for a single council may displace economic activity to the areas covered by councils with less challenging targets. The recent regional workshop on ‘Leading energy efficient communities’, which was targeted at Elected Members and senior council managers identified a lack of confidence in identifying a meaningful performance measure, establishing the baseline and setting a target”.

2.6 What policy and practical support is needed to drive further action?

2.6.1 Councils' views

Councils and others identify a range of policy and practical measures that they believe will help drive and underpin action in relation to climate change. We have tried to present core thoughts structured in relation to the issues that they seek to address.

Measurement, information and training

"Nationally, government needs to recognise the diversity of climate change and the difficulties that this poses to local authorities that are often divided along departmental lines. Additionally, climate change is one of the fastest moving policy issues of our time and one that is constantly in the media, which necessitates regular and concise summaries of both policy changes and public misunderstandings. Producing a website (adequately resourced and supported by an enquiry service similar to Practical Help) that deals with all aspects of climate change, collates information from a variety of sources and provides up to date position statements, FAQs, statistics etc would be invaluable. Currently, under-resourced local authority officers are having to use a huge variety of information sources to keep on top of the issue, which could be much more effectively co-ordinated centrally".

"The most practical action would be to ensure that there are officers and teams dealing with climate change in all authorities".

"A comprehensive programme to identify climate implications at all points of central/local government interface, to avoid perversity and promote good practice".

"Joined up national government including inclusion of aviation in data reporting".

"Developer training eg how to achieve code level 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes".

"Building inspectors need to be trained and empowered to enforce standards".

"Inherent within an approach is the need to be able to assess and measure carbon outputs in a meaningful way, so that comparisons with national and international targets are understood by all. A simple and standardised method for calculating emissions per activity, for example, would assist greatly in negotiations within councils over the prioritisation of projects based on greatest reductions in emissions".

"Access to relevant local information for mitigation and adaptation as setting accurate baseline is vital for any actions to be measured against".

One respondent reports on the usefulness of having developed a 'toolkit'. *"The toolkit has proved popular and can demonstrate that a simple approach to tackling climate change, looking at local impacts, can succeed in producing an attitudinal shift. The toolkit was funded through Defra's Climate Challenge Fund and represents excellent value for money. Further information on the toolkit is available on the BCW website www.wellingborough.gov.uk. Funding was critical in bringing this initiative to market on behalf of the LSP – therefore support through not only funding initiatives but also in providing access to expertise in applying for funds is needed to encourage innovation to happen".*

"Guidance and advice for specific services including education and social services and their inspection regimes. Engagement with relevant local government professional societies and institutions to ensure that climate change is recognised in societies work programmes and in training, accreditation and continuing professional development".

Enforceable and measurable targets

As previously highlighted, the need for targets is repeatedly identified in responses to a number of the questions posed by the Commission. Typical comments include: *"Challenging national targets eg on carbon-neutral homes, energy efficiency rating of existing housing stock, untreated waste to landfill"*.

"Carbon dioxide reduction targets need to be set for all schools".

"Monitoring and reporting mechanisms eg performance indicators/data collection, using say ICLEI model so that comparisons can be made with other EU and world communities".

"Timely measuring, monitoring and reporting of information".

"Integration of mitigation and adaptation issues into performance and inspection regimes".

Tightening/enforcing building standards

"Building regulations could be improved to reduce the emissions from all refurbishments and in line with the zero emissions by 2016 in the domestic sector".

"We need to use effective mechanisms more imaginatively and effectively rather than waiting on higher standards. For example instead of waiting for local development documents to replace local plan, produce a summary of existing government policy and advise for use by planning as a material consideration to drive up developing standards".

Regulatory processes/oversight

"Quicker processing of regulations, national guidance and legislation eg very long lead-in time to code for sustainable homes has caused problems and gives the impression that this is not an urgent or priority issue".

"Changes to permitted development rights in relation to renewable technologies".

"Nationally the government must ensure that its policies are consistent".

"Remove the 'red tape' issues around planning for renewables".

"Local area agreements do not have any emphasis on sustainability (other than waste management). It is quite surprising that LAAs are supposedly the vehicle for delivering improvement, yet there is little emphasis in the model on environmental management".

Relationships, responsibilities and powers

There are several comments on the need to understand relationships and responsibilities of the various organisations, bodies, etc. that have a role/responsibility in relation to climate change. *"Whilst a Venn diagram of these arrangements may be too simple, there is a need to understand the respective contributions at national, regional and local level of the Environment Agency, the power, water and oil companies, the health, highways and rail authorities, and the emergency services. How does this strategic organisational matrix hang together, who is responsible for what and what contribution can/should all these other authorities/agencies make to the emissions reduction agenda given that they are responsible for a great deal of expenditure and therefore activity that produces carbon. A particular example in a local authority context concerns schools which have become independent entities. What is DfES saying to schools that they should do?"*

"RDA's practical and financial support would be very valuable".

"Any practical support for sub-regional action from RDAs would assist in driving and delivering for action by local authorities. Clear guidance about the expected responsibilities (eg of RDAs and regional assemblies) would assist greatly in the local demarcation of roles and avoid duplication of activity" .

"Road traffic needs to be decoupled from economic growth. If public transport is to play a major part in tackling the climate change impacts, it needs to be properly funded and coordinated. This will only be achieved through the reintroduction of bus regulation by local authorities. Local authorities must therefore be empowered by central government to do this" .

"A duty on LSP partners (PCT etc) to co-operate with local authorities in reducing emissions of partner organisations and the locality" .

Funding, economic instruments/incentives

A large number of respondents identify funding/financial issues in terms of scale, effectiveness and the role of incentives.

"Funding: currently weak or non-existent compared to other policy areas eg waste" .

"Fiscal incentives for all, local authorities, communities, the domestic sector" .

"Green taxes eg aviation tax must be reinvested into green initiatives if they are going to have any credibility. The current Low Carbon Building Programme Fund is seriously under funded and has done much to discourage people wishing to install renewable energy technologies" .

"In terms of incentives government in the broadest sense (ie including ourselves in local government) need to seek to offer incentives to change behaviour. One such model would be a scheme of personal carbon credits to enable carbon trading built into the tax system. Alternatively extensions of grant funds to increase the rate of change in building modifications, including greater innovation, would be beneficial" .

"Carbon budgets as proposed in draft climate change bill could enable local authorities to drive carbon reductions in their area" .

"Changes to taxation re motor vehicles, and VAT removed from climate change friendly goods" .

"Tax non-sustainable products" .

"On incentives, as well as targets, funding would probably act as an incentive for local authorities to be more involved in tackling climate change. For example, if we achieve our targets and were then rewarded by match funding for green initiatives this might help us deliver climate change measures" .

"Financial rewards for service improvement in local authorities have already proved successful, for example the Planning Delivery Grant. Introduce a financial reward scheme with the condition that reward monies be ring-fenced and used for further climate change measures" .

"Public sector grants for business support should be conditional on a programme and action plan for tackling climate change being developed and which must then be implemented" .

Invest to save

"Money that can be used to fund the up front costs on invest to save, etc would help".

"Increased invest-to-save schemes – for wider areas of application – street lighting, vehicles; make available to public transport operators/developers to fund bus services etc."

"Any support (financial or statutory duty) that will encourage cash strapped authorities to pay the cost of employing a Climate Change/ Carbon Management Officer".

"Most local authorities could find a little from invest to save initiatives but may have to revise their Financial Regulations to allow such reinvestment. This might be assisted if a non-competitive pump priming grant/fund was available from central government to encourage action".

Whole life costing

"Help with carbon costing and value at stake costing to get schemes past members and get managerial support for smaller authorities as well as larger organisations".

"The ability to make public procurement decisions based on 'whole life costing' principles has been greatly assisted by the UK Sustainable Procurement Strategy, but a further level of easily accessible detailed information is required by council procurement practitioners on product impact, to allow guidance to be made available to all staff involved in day to day purchasing".

2.6.2 Other government and local government organisations

Additional issues raised include:

"Further research into practical and workable solutions to things like area-based biomass energy supply and low-carbon timber-based construction".

"Better understanding of the role of public space, particularly green space and green infrastructure, in mitigating climate change, enhancing urban resilience and functionality, and helping urban areas and urban communities adjust to the consequences. For example, sustainable drainage and water management; shade, shelter and reduced energy demand; more sustainable building construction; shade and health against increased UV radiation".

"Central government policy statements on adaptation to climate change need to be backed by resources, particularly:

- *guidance – adaptation is a new and developing field where there is little existing experience and advice. There is the need to consolidate research and existing examples of practice into practical help and guidance. The Nottingham Declaration Action Pack, 3 Regions checklist for developers, UKCIP tools, etc....*
- *training – need for improved staff training in the unfamiliar field; and*
- *expert support and assistance to officers via consultancies, networks and partnerships. Adaptation could benefit from schemes similar to those run by Carbon Trust and EST to support local authority mitigation work.*

Need an adaptation performance indicator with the new Performance Framework to provide a driver for action".

2.6.3 Pressure and interest groups

"Measurement is the key to management, and measuring carbon emissions the key to managing them. Gordon Brown said he will be counting the carbon as well as the pennies, but will he do it as well? We need a parallel system of accounting based on carbon instead of money. Then we can have full budgetary control over our carbon and our carbon accountants will oversee and audit our progress".

2.6.4 Private bodies and businesses

The responses from what we have called 'private bodies and businesses' provide a number of interesting and practical insights. Respondents in this category mainly comprise organisations involved in securing and delivering funding and expertise in relation to local authority climate change as well as administering/being involved in government funding schemes. It was felt that some of the issues and practical points raised were worthy of inclusion virtually in their entirety. They are provided below with some editing to group issues under common headings. All text is taken directly from the various responses.

New drivers

The government is currently consulting on guidance to local authorities in England and Wales on climate change mitigation and fuel poverty. Responses, collected by the DTI, must be in by 1 August 2007. The consultation is the result of the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006 which committed the government to producing an 'energy measures report' by August 2007. The report must contain information on measures that local authorities can take in order to:

- improve energy efficiency;
- increase the levels of microgeneration;
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions; or
- reduce the number of households living in fuel poverty.

Local authorities will have to 'have regard' to the report when exercising their functions.

Set a carbon emission performance indicator or similar

An idea, which is apparently being discussed within the department for Communities and Local Government, is putting a performance indicator for carbon emissions on local authorities in the new performance indicator regime in 2008

Support

When presented with a funding crisis following the tax ruling last year, EST, following the pattern of many organisations, axed external programmes which involved few core staff. This included the Local Authority Support Programme, whose pilots had been running for several years, based in several independent Energy Efficiency Advice Centres. The role of the programme was to advise local authorities on assisting householders to reduce their consumption of energy – usually through setting up joint projects. As EST has been given responsibility by central government to persuade householders to reduce their consumption of energy, this programme should be restored.

The Carbon Trust low carbon advice programme is very limited in the sense that it only takes round a score of councils a year. The Carbon Trust funds for councils making energy efficiency improvements are also very limited (currently worth only around £20m) and needs to be drastically expanded to help the 400 plus councils.

Commitments

As a driver to seriously tackle energy costs, *all* local authorities (above tertiary level) should be included in the mandatory *Energy Performance Commitment scheme* (EPC), so such authorities are taking an exemplar role. Only a minority of over 400 local authorities are estimated to meet the criteria to enter the EPC scheme as described in the recent Defra consultation document.

Council tax reduction for householders installing energy-saving measures

This measure has attracted widespread support as an EEC promotion.

Government policy needs to change to create ESCOs and decentralised energy systems

These district CHP schemes have found it very difficult to incorporate private sector development. There are several reasons for this, but surprisingly price is not one of them as reasonable terms are usually offered. The inertia in the private sector is because property developers and property companies do not understand district energy schemes and believe it would put off their tenants or, in the case of speculative developments, future owners. The voluntary approach has clearly failed and if the government is serious about district CHP and zero-carbon homes by 2016 they must empower local planning authorities to set a condition that new developments must join a local CHP scheme, or provide the equivalent energy in terms of carbon emissions from renewable sources onsite. The other alternative is that the LPA can set an emission figure for that site which means the developer has little choice but to join up. So far the government has shown reluctance to do anything that would seriously tie the hands of property developers.

Council as a social housing provider - upgrade the Decent Homes Standard

More serious attention should be paid by the government to the thermal requirements set out in the Decent Homes Standard for Social Housing when they are next revised. This is necessary in order to ensure that the government meets its legal duty to relieve fuel poverty and will also mean further reductions in carbon emissions from the domestic sector.

Social housing is at such a crisis point in terms of lack of availability that it needs a revival of council house building – and vague rumours that the government is considering substantially increasing investment in this are very welcome. Under current policy, these homes would be built to Code for Sustainable Homes 3 Star rating, which is a considerable improvement on current Building Regulations.

Local Area Agreements

There is currently a *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill* proceeding through Parliament. The government could amend the sections on local area agreements and local improvement targets to specify that energy efficiency and sustainable energy targets can be included in local agreements.

Coherent government policies on town planning and development control

Merton³ and Croydon⁴ and the Surrey districts are amongst several local planning authorities enforcing a 10 percent onsite renewable energy obligation on new development. Several councils have developed, or are creating, SPDs on renewable energy.⁵ Following these examples, the government caught up by issuing Planning Policy Statement 22.

According to ministers, councils will receive no new money or powers (that could be used to raise revenues)⁶. Within the next nine years, the government's intention is to make sure that every single new home is a zero

³ "Enforcing a 10% target – the London experience" *Claire Bonham-Carter, Faber Maunsell*

⁴ Croydon 10 per cent definition: "The council will expect all development (either new build or conversion) with a floor-space of 1000m² or ten or more residential units to incorporate renewable energy production equipment to provide at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements."

⁵ www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/plan_SPD_LewesECSC2.pdf

⁶ Speeches and responses to questions by Ruth Kelly Dec 2006 and April 2007.

carbon home, but unless more resources go into hard pressed planning and building control departments, then it is going to be very difficult to see how that is going to be achieved.

Standards

The new draft Planning Policy Statement on Climate Change, if that draft is confirmed, will actually *deter* many local authorities from wishing to help to save energy in new development or in buildings that apply for planning permission for an extension. This is because local authorities who want to be able to set higher minimum energy standards than the building regulations have been told that this government no longer considers that appropriate. They consider that even the most go-ahead local authorities must not set for general development an emission figure higher than that set by Part L in the building regulations⁷. Building regulations have now become the maximum rather than the minimum standard.

Recently, in its core strategy and rural issues plan, Bedford borough council wanted to reduce CO₂ emissions by a modest 10 percent more than the amount set out in building regulations for certain developments. This is equivalent to the most basic level of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The government office for the east of England ruled that out on the grounds that the current planning system “does not permit the setting of energy efficiency standards.”

This example is one of several in England where CLG officials have warned councils. These issues were tackled in MP Martin Caton’s private members *Local Planning Authorities (Energy and Energy Efficiency) Bill*. The bill fell due to government opposition.

It is most important to ensure that local authorities are not deterred from ensuring that in their locality developers build to better than the minimum standard. If there is concern about varying standards, it could be agreed that any standard set could be at least one of the levels specified in the document published by CLG in December 2006 entitled *Code for Sustainable Homes – A Step Change in Sustainable House Building Practice*. Standards set for non-domestic buildings could be taken from BREEAM standards, until the government gets round to drawing up its own code.

The incorporation of performance indicators on climate change in the 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will embed a “climate change focused” culture in local authorities and drive local action on climate change as it will cease to be a voluntary act. Councils must be provided with the necessary support to tackle carbon emissions in the run up to the new CAA.

2.7 What are the key messages for local and national government in setting policy for emissions reductions and building adaptive capacity?

2.7.1 Councils

As is clear from the rest of the report, there are a number of messages embedded in the responses to the commission’s call for evidence. This section only provides a summary of core messages given in respondents’ answers to the question rather than summarising all messages from all questions. As with elsewhere, these have been grouped in types of issue and, for completeness, are unedited.

Policy consistency

“Policy consistency – the public easily detect major inconsistencies eg between climate change and aviation policy. This fosters cynicism, and adds to negative perceptions of governance and the democratic deficit”.

⁷ Apparently LPA’s will be allowed to set an energy efficiency standard in the case of a limited “special” site, but cannot set it to such a level so as the cost would deter development. Who decides whether it would deter development is unclear, but unless clarified, it could well be by default the CLG inspector acting on the information provided a developer.

“Given that central government is sending out a strong message that climate change is a priority and that local authorities are the key to delivering national climate change targets, there is remarkably little financial and regulatory support to local authorities to help achieve the aims”.

“In setting policy it is vital that national government doesn’t restrict or provide a barrier to local authorities delivering action on climate change. For example, as part of the planned County council activity for tackling climate change it has been proposed that a “localised” carbon-offsetting scheme is established. This could be directly linked to landscape restoration and community renewable energy projects throughout the County. However the Defra Code of Practice for Carbon Offsetting schemes proposes that offsetting should be through the purchase of regulated carbon credits which are generated under the Kyoto protocol’s Clean Development Mechanism or through the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. We are acutely aware of the need for offsetting to be backed up by credible quantification and verification procedures. However, at a time when the UK government is encouraging local authorities to take a leadership role on tackling climate change, by precluding the use of high quality voluntary emissions reductions credits this code has the potential to undermine opportunities to raise awareness and deliver significant wider sustainable development benefits. Any scheme offering activity in the UK would not be eligible for any of the regulated credits, and therefore would not comply with the Code in its current form, although a scheme offering local benefits would have great potential to increase customer awareness of offsetting”.

“Government must remove barriers that protect bad practice (poor building standards) or restrictive practice (limits on private wire supplies from co-generation or tri-generation)”.

“Consider the financial restraints under which local government is operating and adequately fund long, medium and short term initiatives”.

Clarification and responsibility

“We need to be clear what level of responsibility the authority has for erstwhile “private actor” emissions in its area and what measures and targets (if any) will be dispersed within the proposed five year carbon budgeting cycle. As legislative and fiscal powers reside exclusively at national level and the measures are sectorally derived, most of the expected emissions reduction at authority level (an area basis) is already determined by the expected responses to sectoral measures. Therefore, our local obligation is unclear. Whilst we have policy measures for example to reduce travel, promote modal shift and encourage renewable energy deployment, the specific contribution required from these sources is not defined”.

“The Climate Change Bill proposes the creation of a separate stand alone body, the Committee for Climate Change. However with so many organisations existing (UKCIP, Local Government Commission on Climate Change, as well as other public sector agencies such as Natural England, Environment Agency, SEEDA, we must be careful that with so many organisations with a vested interest this does not lead to unnecessary costly duplication of work and an overall diluted effect in terms of impact of policy/strategy. To solve this we should establish who will take the lead and secondly ensure that any measures or guidance set in place are realistic and offer practical guidance to all concerned”.

Help and leadership

“As far as building adaptive capacity is concerned this is very much a local issue. However, we need to understand what level of adaptive capacity we already have in our contingency plans, warning systems and external communications, and what additional capacity is provided by others. At present much of this agenda is not clear”.

“Every area is different and therefore requires tailored mitigation and adaptation strategies and actions”.

"Whilst not all local authorities are the same, some common targets for local authorities will be needed. It appears that action on climate change suffers from the 'someone else will do it' syndrome so, if local authorities are not being seen to be held to the same requirements as others it may discourage individual local authorities to pioneer (or even be involved) in addressing some of the climate change issues. At present there are some authorities who have taken the initiative and, possibly quite rightly, are being promoted as leaders in this field. However, their initiative does set them apart from others and those authorities struggling to gain a foothold don't have the same level of support".

"Approach climate change as an issue which should transcend party boundaries".

"Crucially, adaptive capacity will only be built when members/senior management have the vision to ensure "business as usual" evolves to have sustainability as a core measure of success alongside targets such as cost, time, etc."

"Use fiscal systems to promote change - eg biofuels are still too expensive and need to be offered tax breaks. Seriously consider legislation to tax the least energy efficient products out of production".

"The government should work towards implementing a system of mandatory personal carbon allowances including emissions from air travel".

"The availability of local data relevant to community for both mitigation targets and how to adapt to impacts of climate change is essential".

"Instigate a higher profile national marketing campaign to support local operations".

"Place a duty on all public sector bodies to co-operate under local government leadership to reduce emissions".

"Place more emphasis on influencing practices, technologies and products (including packaging) of global and national industries. Le design out damaging aspects at source".

"Partnership working is key – local authorities cannot deliver on their own".

2.7.2 Other government and local government organisations

General

"Solutions need to be built which can cross administrative boundaries".

"There needs to be mechanisms available which can facilitate dialogue between professionals and elected officials on climate change issues and solutions".

"We need to think differently about funding for climate change and to enable alternative funding solutions for new issues and problems to come forward and be available".

"Short to medium term investment needs to be available to aid the transition to a low carbon society".

Adaptation

"Some climate change is inevitable due to past (and present) GHG emissions regardless of our success in reducing emissions from now on and, hence, there is a need to adapt to a degree of climate change. Global climate change produces local impacts – hence councils have to identify and prioritise key local climate risks

for their communities. Work on adaptation brings local benefits – some climate changes may offer opportunities as well as threats”.

2.7.3 Pressure and interest groups

“Set clear and achievable annual carbon reduction targets that can be measured and have penalties which will bite. Do not allow carbon debt to be carried forward to another accounting period. eg no bonuses, dividends for shareholders, award of share options or pay increases for directors of organisations that do not meet carbon reduction targets. No above inflation price increases allowed either. Mandate for organisations to carry out disaster planning, increased decentralisation, and maintain larger financial (and carbon) contingency funds”.

2.7.4 Private bodies and businesses

A number of harsh messages are present in responses, particularly concerning support for local government from national government.

“Local councils have led the field on many environmental issues and induced national government to follow. One of the examples of this is the “Merton Rule”, which the ODPM originally opposed, then supported, and finally copied it into the Planning Policy 22 to encourage other local planning authorities to follow”.

“CLG’s new Planning Policy Statement on Climate Change has attracted much criticism for its confusing messages about what local planners can and can’t do on cutting carbon emissions in new buildings. In fact the only constant message repeated several times in the document is that LPA’s must not set any policy that could be perceived as deterring house builders”.

“The government has “form” on playing fast and loose with local government on sustainable energy matters, and this lack of consistency smacks of a general contempt by UK government for local government. For example, in Budget 2006, local authorities were promised £20 million over the ensuing two years to promote energy efficiency in local housing. To our knowledge, none of that money has yet been forthcoming for that original purpose. Another example is the government support for the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 and related legislation. Defra has allowed HECA, the only legislative backed policy on climate change mitigation that concerns local government to “wither on the vine”. This is despite it being by far the most effective energy saving programme pre-EEC”.

“There are indications that Defra is preparing possible council performance measures on carbon emission savings to be included in the new performance regime in 2008, if these were confirmed it would show that central government was serious in its ambitions for action by local authorities on cutting emissions of carbon. The issue then will be - will the councils have enough resources to make a difference?”

“The question the LGA has to ask the government is **how far are you willing to go to work with local authorities to achieve significant carbon savings**⁸? Are you willing to provide a stable policy and financial regime for local authorities to act effectively and over time?”

“We believe that the CPA will provide a significant signal to local authorities on delivering action on climate change. However, this will not be enough on its own; local authorities need to find significant capital resources to implement energy efficiency projects and find enough energy management resources to make this all happen. The proposed Energy Performance Commitment (EPC) has the potential to help on this but currently the way that the auction revenue recycling mechanism is set to work remains unclear”.

⁸ Their emphasis.

2.7.5 Regional bodies

Additional messages communicated in the regional responses are as follows:

- *“national government must lead by example in getting its own ‘house in order’”;*
- *“national government should invest in adaptation study work carried out at the regional level but accessible at local authority level”;*
- *“local government must work with citizens to progress actions that are profitable, at the individual level appear small, but collectively are big (loft and cavity wall insulation, changing to low energy light bulbs now)”;* and
- *“local government must take heed of the emerging evidence base regarding the need to adapt and act on it”.*

3. 'Conclusions'

As was noted in the introduction, the objective of this study has been to synthesise the large number of responses from the commission's call into a single document that reflects the issues raised in relation to the commission's questions set out in the call. The original brief was to provide a report of 20 pages or so which, on reflection and given the large number of useful responses and detail provided, was ambitious.

In terms of findings, it would be inappropriate (and impertinent) for us to seek to draw issues into a single set of conclusions and recommendations for this report as this is clearly the role of the commission. However, when drawing such conclusions, the commission should be aware that maintaining a focus for the report has necessitated a rapid review of the evidence which, in turn, has inevitably required us to prioritise efforts towards the key issues raised by the commission itself. There may, however, be information in the responses that could be used to answer other questions or perhaps to further inform the commission on specifics of relevance to the conclusions and recommendations it may wish to make.

That said, we believe the report provides a fair basis for the commission from which to draw a number of firm conclusions and recommendations. It is suggested that a sensible way to would be for the commission to draft such conclusions and recommendations and explore the evidence a second time in order to glean any additional information that may help to test or refine these conclusions.

Annex I Responses to European call for evidence

Table A1: LG Commission call for European evidence		
Question posed	Sweden	Finland
What are the drivers for action in your nation/area for reducing CO2 emissions and adapting to climate change?	Environmental taxes on energy and carbon, Investment incentives, General awareness, Objectives on national, regional and local levels, public procurement etc.	wide awareness of the need to tackle against climate change and prepare to the various consequences of it among both politicians and citizens
What statutory/regulatory frameworks and powers exist in your nation enabling local government to play a role in tackling climate change?	The constitutional powers and ability to manage their own affairs and to levy local income tax. The ability to act according to central government special legislation (for instance on investment programmes). Environmental act with an overall objective of promoting an environmentally sustainable development and most of the inspectors on the local level.	-existing (since 1997) and developing (2007) energy program and agreement system between cities/municipalities/joint municipalities and Ministry of Trade; -campaign Cities for Climate Protection-Finland (ICLEI) run by AFLRA -Climate Forum run by Ministry of Environment (consists of widely different interest groups like industry, labour and NGOs) -Adaptation Strategy and Program run by Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
What targets have been set in your nation/area for reducing CO2 emissions and adapting to climate change?	-National target on 4% reduction 1990-2008/2012.	-local targets to diminish emissions varies (dimensions are municipality's own direct energy consumption, waste management, influence on the emissions of other producers like citizens, industry, energy producers, services... -national targets as minimum EU burden sharing 1997 level and local targets commonly at least the national level
What funding do local authorities have or receive to tackle climate change?	-Own income tax, general government grants, fees in local utilities for water, waste, energy etc. Environmental inspection partly financed buy fees (30%). -Central government investment grants for Local Investment Programmes and Climate Investment Programmes (ab. 0,5 bn Euro 1997-2002 and ab. 0,17 bn Euro 2002-2008, covering about 20% of investment cost) and grants for energy efficiency investments and converting to renewables in public buildings (ab. 0,2 bn Euro 2007-2009). -Local energy advisors working towards the public in almost all municipalities, partly funded by central government.	-state subsidies for energy audits by 40-50% and 20-30% investments of own energy saving activities and renewables (the percentage of investment subsidies varies case by case)

<p>What are the most successful local authority approaches to reducing CO₂ emissions and adapting to climate change? What approaches have your found less successful?</p>	<p>-District heating expansion (today about 50 TWh) and conversion to about 80% renewables and regained heat has played a leading role in reducing Swedish carbon emissions with 40% since 1970. District heating was previously local government owned, but is today partly owned and operated by private and state companies.</p> <p>-Simultaneous power and heat generation is another important factor (5 TWh of electricity today with a future potential of maybe 20).</p> <p>-Government grants for investment programmes above are expected to reduce national carbon emissions by 3 %, 1997-2008.</p> <p>-Own professional competence in environment, environmental act inspectors, municipal technical service officers, energy advisers etc. As well as a local political interest.</p> <p>-A fair amount of information towards the public from local and national level.</p> <p>-Much needs to be done about increasing transports and traffic. There is a large share of public transportation in dense areas, in Stockholm about 70%, increasing public transport in the dense southern Skane region. Recent traffic congestion charging in the city of Stockholm has proven an effective measure.</p>	<p>Useful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -energy audits of municipal buildings, -auditing the possibilities of renewable energy sources heat production, public procurement eg buying environmental friendly electricity or other energy using equipment -heat entrepreneurship (private constructor takes care of building heating; work, wood based fuel and sometimes also equipment like boilers) -updating of the local building and environmental codes when avoiding future risks eg floods -advising municipals by local and regional energy agencies or other relevant and neutral body -education campaigns in schools (Young Climate Ambassadors) -local workshops and seminars (both municipals and elected) -web pages -the real signs of climate change extremes (hot summers and short winters, storms, floods...) <p>Less useful or unsure effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the wide production and delivering of brochures without personal motivating
<p>Who is accountable in your area for meeting any targets for reducing CO₂ emissions and adapting to climate change?</p>	<p>-The government level setting the targets is responsible to itself. Central government targets can not be "imposed" on local government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the board of municipality or city ; often delegated to the board of technical/infrastructure issues or other -the adaptation will be build into normal planning and doing
<p>What practical support do local authorities receive?</p>	<p>-Some from national agencies for environment, energy, roads building etc. and some from regional central government administration. Projects, conferences, guidelines, good examples etc.</p>	<p>-audit and investment subsidies, education</p>
<p>What would enable a more effective response in your nation/area for reducing CO₂ emissions and adapting to climate change?</p>	<p>-The most effective way is of course through general taxation (or auctioned emissions trading), enabling cost effective solutions. This has to consider the competitive situation of Swedish industry, transport etc.</p>	<p>Tools: expertise, legal possibilities, cooperation</p> <p>special expertise of energy and climate issues served near to municipalities (like local energy agencies) and joint municipalities</p> <p>firm legal basis to determine heating method (district heating of houses, renewables as energy source) in new areas (instead of free competition) where municipalities and cities are significantly able to diminish emissions</p> <p>co-operation of neighbour municipalities, regions (in spatial planning, public traffic, energy end use and sometimes also as to energy production...</p>

Rough translation of response from Bretagne, Pays de la Loire, Poitou Charentes

Legal and financial framework in France

In keeping with its Kyoto protocol obligations, France is committed to diminishing its green house gas emissions by 8 per cent of 1990 levels. The government put in place a Climate Plan (2004-2012). An English version of the plan is available at: <http://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/PLANCLIMATANGLAIS.pdf>)

The key measures included in the plan are: raising public awareness, buildings, waste, deforestation, sustainable air conditioning and supporting research.

The framework law on energy of July 2005 proposed developing renewable energy, the heating industry and improving transport.

In 2006, the De Boissieu report (commissioned by the government) set the objective of dividing green house gas emissions by 4 by 2050.

The government also wants to put in place the principle of carbon neutrality for EU structural funds and large projects co-financed by the state and the regions. However, there's a problem in calculating the exact emissions of local authorities.

National/local responsibility

French regions have restricted competencies with regard to energy and the environment (parks, waste, air quality) and shared competency with the French state. The activities of French regions in this area are voluntary.

Energy policy is a state competency. French regions co-operate with the ADEME (state regional agencies on energy). Since 2004, they have been developing actions to improve energy, justified by the fight against climate change.

Regional activity and policies used

Region Poitou-Charentes:

Importance of local partnership

The region has built up a good partnership over the past 10 years with the local ADEME agency and started to reflect on climate change after participating in the Johannesburg summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.

In 2004, ADEME carried out a survey of regional emissions, and identified the most emitting sectors (transport, housing and services). The regional council set up a large partnership between public and private actors (over 300 partners were involved) in order to relaunch the policy of the struggle against climate change.

Objectives of the region:

The region has committed itself to limiting the GHG emissions of its own services (regional transport, training and agricultural policies). Its objective is to reduce CO₂ by 800,000 tonnes by 2010 (which amounts to one third of the housing emissions in the region).

Financial means

The budget for dealing with climate change for 2007-2013 will be about 120 million Euros (as opposed to 50 for 2000-2006). The funds come from the state, the region and Europe (two fifths from the structural funds).

Action plan

The region wrote a white paper in 2004, which sets out the following basic actions:

Actions in its own area - energy efficiency of buildings, building a school "Kyoto 100 per cent clean energy" by 2009, buying 'flex-fioul' (hybrid?) vehicles.

Actions relating to its competencies:

- reducing the demand for energy
- installing production units for renewable energy (Potou-Charentes is the leading French region for solar power per inhabitant)
- transport: supporting rail transport, freight transfer, using biofuels in regional trains.
- public procurement: consideration of environmental standards

Actions with non local and regional authorities:

- sustainable development contracts with small and medium sized towns
- local contracts (climate and sustainable energy)

Adaptation measures

- work in progress to assess the vulnerability of the area (drought, rising sea levels) and improving water management (economising water usage, recycling rain water)

Information for the general public

Information on climate change and encouraging measures to make people more eco-aware.

A follow up of all the actions is carried out each year in the regional activity record.

Region Bretagne

Brittany has incorporated Agenda 21 in its services (having started doing so in 2004).

Its action focuses on:

A sectoral approach in the domains touched upon by climate change:

- evaluating the lowering of levels of biodiversity
- improving water quality

Developing an energy policy to limit GHG emissions and the consumption of energy:

- improving railway transport
- defining a regional plan on sustainable use of energy
 - large consultation for a global plan
 - defining a regional wind plan
 - supporting the biomasse ? sector (wood, methane)
 - support with ADEME for local solar power initiatives

A communication policy and a network

The Brittany region leads a working group for regions for sustainable development, called NRG4SD.

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