



Evaluation of the Local Carbon Framework Pilots

6. Towards a council framework on climate change

A report by CAG Consultants in association with Impetus Consulting and Dr Joanne Wade

Commissioned by the Local Government Association and the Department for Energy and Climate Change

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6. Towards a council framework on climate change

Note to reader

This chapter is taken from the full report of the LGA and DECC Evaluation of the Local Carbon Framework Pilots, produced by CAG Consultants in association with Impetus Consulting and Dr. Joanne Wade.

This chapter puts forward initial proposals for the development of a Council Framework on Climate Change. They are designed to provoke thought and discussion about what shape the framework might take and what further work will be required to develop it.

The chapter sets out the background to the idea of a council framework, puts forward initial proposals about how the framework might be structured and discusses the approach and next steps for developing the framework. It builds on a previous proposal developed by CAG Consultants in March 2011.

Background

The MoU between local and central government pledges to use the experience of the LCF pilots to “contribute to the design of a Council Framework on Climate Change that would act as a local plan on delivering carbon emissions, encapsulating the varying portfolios of carbon reduction measures relevant to individual or grouped councils”¹.

The proposal to create a Council Framework on Climate Change stemmed from the pledge in the Local Government Offer on Climate Change to develop a “single journey for all councils in tackling climate change”². This would enable councils to:

- Understand their local emissions;
- Identify local opportunities for improving energy efficiency, reducing emissions from transport, generating and supplying energy, tackling waste, and reducing fuel poverty;
- Understand the costs associated with these opportunities;

¹ Local Government Group and Department for Energy and Climate Change (2011), *Memorandum of Understanding between the LG Group and the Department of Energy and Climate Change*, 9 March 2011. Available from: www.decc.gov.uk

² Local Government Group (2010), *Local Government’s Offer on Climate Change*, September 2010. Available from: www.lga.gov.uk

- Lever in funding for delivery;
- Produce a prospectus for private-sector, community and partnership delivery of opportunities;
- Produce a delivery plan that links into other partners and initiatives;
- Benchmark their success and progress against their peer councils;
- Share good practice, financial, legal and procurement agreements, technology, innovation, etc.
- Receive training for the skills development of council staff;
- Be accountable to their local people on their action on climate change; and
- Set out their contribution to reducing emissions locally and nationally.

Towards a council framework on climate change

Structure

The LCF pilot projects demonstrate the wide variety of action that can be taken by councils to achieve carbon emissions reductions. They also demonstrate the different scales appropriate to some actions and the suitability of various interventions to different council types, for example county, unitary or district councils, or urban and rural councils.

The Local Government Offer puts forward the idea of a single journey. For a number of reasons, it is unlikely that there is a single journey that all councils can take: different interventions will be more or less appropriate for different council types; council action needs to tie-in with other local priorities, such as job creation or tackling fuel poverty; and that innovation should be encouraged by providing councils the flexibility to forge their own path on their carbon journey.

Nevertheless, there are steps that all councils need to take, such as securing corporate commitment, setting baselines, saving own-estate energy and so on. And there are also key areas of intervention that apply to all councils. Therefore a universal framework for action is possible, and desirable, provided it is flexible enough to recognise differences between councils.

As a starting point for developing a framework for council action on climate change, figure 1 outlines a suggested structure through which to frame, collate and map the various interventions that councils can take. This is based around a tree analogy of roots (corporate commitment and skills), trunk (own estate and services) and branches (community-wide emissions, national initiatives). The idea builds on previous work to support councils, such as the Nottingham Declaration website and support tools; it is important that any Council Framework on Climate Change builds on such work.

Figure 1. A suggested structure for low carbon council activity

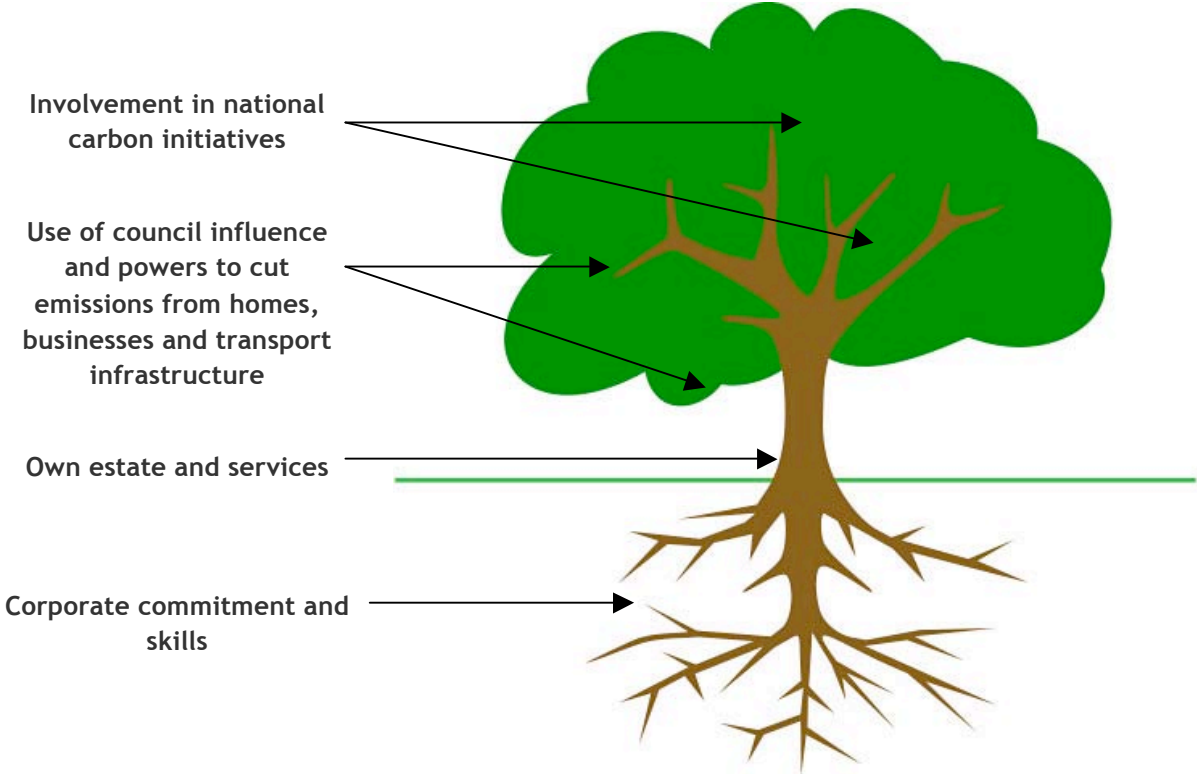


Table 3 below provides an indicative example of the types of activities that would be mapped against each of the four areas of intervention. Annex B develops this further by mapping the LCF projects and outputs against these four areas.

Table 3. Council Framework on Climate Change - example activities by intervention area

Element	Area of intervention	Example activities
Roots	1. Corporate commitment and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging and enabling key decision-makers (Members, senior management, key departments and partners) Building capacity (skills development, training, tools) Establishing the evidence (setting baselines, developing strategy and setting targets) Securing funding and resources Reporting and monitoring
Trunk	2. Own estate and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saving energy on council estate Reducing emissions from transport (own fleet and services) Reducing procurement carbon footprint Workforce engagement
Branches	3. Addressing community-wide emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing domestic emissions Tackling travel-related emissions Supporting public sector actions (schools, hospital, etc) Supporting a low carbon economy Supporting community action Low carbon energy generation
	4. Contributing to national carbon reduction initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting national initiatives at the local level e.g. Green Deal, smart meter roll out, renewable energy deployment

To allow for self-assessment or benchmarking, the framework could be developed to incorporate a 'stepped' approach to council progress on climate change, an indicative example of which is set out below in table 4. Importantly, this could also provide a means to develop a route map for councils with pointers about where to start and what interventions are most appropriate for them.

This stepped approach would highlight activities that all councils should be doing on each area of intervention (starting out), to actions that intermediate-level councils might be taking (getting there), to actions that the most advanced councils could take

(taking a lead). The examples given in the table are on corporate commitment, and are designed merely to provoke thought.

Table 4. Council Framework on Climate Change - example 'stepped' approach

Area of intervention	Activity	Progress			
		0. No action	1. Starting out	2. Getting there	3. Taking a lead
1. Corporate commitment and skills	Corporate commitment	Not started yet	Basic activities that all councils should be doing e.g. council has signed new Nottingham Declaration	Intermediate action, shows a good commitment and demonstrable progress e.g. council has developed a robust strategy backed up with senior-level commitment from council and key partners	Advanced or innovative action. Demonstrates leadership in this area e.g. council has demonstrated senior-level leadership, contributing to sector-wide learning and part of national debate
	Capacity-building				
	Evidence base				
	Funding and resources				
	Reporting and monitoring				
2. Own estate and services	-				
3. Addressing community-wide emissions	-				
4. Contributing to national carbon reduction initiatives	-				

A stepped approach would need to be flexible enough to recognise that some activities will more or less relevant to all councils, depending on their areas of responsibility and locally-specific factors like geographical location, urban density and so on. It should also recognise that not all councils will take sequential approach to taking action and that the steps outlined are there as a guide.



Some areas of intervention and activities will also be more difficult to grade than others, particularly areas that require 'softer' or harder-to-measure interventions such as behavioural change measures or community capacity-building.

Some actions would be cross-cutting, and others would be very specific to a particular council department or function.

Features

Within this broad structure, the framework could include some or all of the following features:

- A map, or portfolio, of activities for each area of intervention, highlighting which councils that are most appropriate for;
- Links to case studies, tools, guidance, training and other support related to these different activities;
- A facility to peer review the outputs linked above, to enable councils to make an informed decision about which is the most appropriate for them;
- A facility to self-assess or benchmark progress against councils. This could be designed in a way that allowed councils to compare themselves against all councils as well 'like-for-like' comparisons; and
- Potentially provide a platform for members of the public to also view and compare council progress.

This could also be linked to facility that provided a more quantitative understanding of council progress, with data being collected and reporting for example of community-wide emissions and other indicators of performance. This would be dependent on standardised data being available sector-wide. Again, this could be a facility for a council use only or a more publicly accessible one.

The result could be a whole library of information. The emphasis therefore would need to be creating something that makes it easy for interested individuals to access the information that is appropriate for them. A web-based facility would provide maximum flexibility and accessibility in this regard.

Building on the LCF pilots programme

The LGA and the Nottingham Declaration Board need to consider what features a Council Framework on Climate Change will require. The previous section provides some initial ideas as to what these might be. This will determine what further work is required in order to develop an effective framework.

It is also worth considering the extent to which the learning from the LCF pilots evaluation already provides the sector with the basis for developing a framework. As a foundation for further action:

- The pilot projects provide an excellent starting point for populating a portfolio of actions that councils can take against different areas of intervention;
- The evaluation has, broadly speaking, provided a good sense of the appropriate scale at which these activities should happen, and for which council types they are most suited to; and
- The projects have been producing a plethora of guidance, tools and other outputs useful to other councils and that could be incorporated into the framework.

To build on the work further, it should be noted that:

- The activities and actions taken by the pilot projects are not comprehensive. In terms of populating the proposed structure for the framework, further work would need to be done to source further examples, tools and outputs. There are plenty of resources already available for doing this. Table 5 highlights some of these;
- As discussed in the previous chapter, further work needs to be done to convert some of the outputs from the LCF pilots evaluation from internal-facing, council-specific outputs into more generic, universally applicable ones;
- As also discussed in the previous chapter, the outputs would benefit from peer review and/or or further testing; and
- Many of the projects are still underway, so a mechanism to capture evolving learning will be important.

Table 5. Potential resources for populating a council framework on climate change

Potential information sources
Nottingham Declaration website and action plan support
Practical help tools and resources on EST's website
Carbon Trust tools and resources for councils
Existing climate change benchmarks (e.g. CAG developed benchmarks on climate change and sustainable energy)
Environment tools database
IDeA website
Beacon Councils examples

Sector-led development

Finally, development of the framework will also need to be based on the experience and feedback of councils themselves. This will help to ensure that is meaningful, practical and that it has a sense of ownership across the sector. Effective engagement and consultation with councils will therefore be vital.

The LCF pilot councils form the nucleus of a group that could be used as a sounding board, but engagement will need to extend to encompass a wide range of councils with different levels of existing progress, commitment, resources, priorities and responsibilities.

It would also be helpful to extend engagement beyond climate change and sustainability officers, incorporating feedback from Members, senior management, officers representing key departments such as planning and finance, and representatives from key delivery partners.

Annex B. LCF pilot activity map

The table below maps out LCF pilot projects and outputs against the indicative council framework structure outlined in chapter 6. Some projects have been listed more than once where they fall into more than one category. The map is not definitive, but is intended instead to provide the basis for discussion and development of a structure for a council framework on climate change.

Key:

Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Multi-Area Agreement (BDP)
Bristol City Council (Bri)
Leeds City Region (LCR)
London Borough of Haringey (Har)
Manchester City Region (MCR)
Northumberland County Council (Nor)
Nottingham City Council (Not)
Oxford City Council (Oxf)
Plymouth City Council (Ply)

(int) = primarily for internal use, specific to that pilot area, although may also have wider applicability and contain useful information for other councils.

(ext) = tool or output designed for use by all councils

Table 7. LCF activity against proposed sections within the Framework for Councils on Climate Change

Element	Area of intervention	Example activities	LCF pilot projects	Published or anticipated resources for other councils
Roots	1. Corporate commitment and skills	Engaging and enabling key decision-makers (Members, senior management, key departments and partners)	Critical local authority leadership skills for LCF delivery (Bri)	Low carbon training toolkit (ext)
			Carbon costing toolkit (Bri)	Carbon costing toolkit (ext)
		Establishing the evidence (setting baselines, developing strategy and setting targets)	Carbon metrics framework (MCR)	Data set and framework; total carbon footprint tool (int)
			Final steps towards a low carbon economy – carbon metrics, aspects of behaviour change and the provision of clear guidance on future delivery (Ply)	Three research reports (int)
		Building capacity (skills development, training, tools)	Critical local authority leadership skills for LCF delivery (Bri)	Low carbon training toolkit (ext)
		Securing funding and resources	-	-
		Reporting and monitoring	Carbon costing toolkit (Bri)	Carbon costing toolkit (ext)
Trunk	2. Own estate and services	Reducing emissions from council estate buildings	Inter-borough solar renewable energy opportunity analysis, framework contract and buying groups (Har)	Three project reports (int); possibly a t (ext)
			Progressing area-based solar schemes (Bri)	Guidance documents (ext)
		Reducing emissions from transport (own fleet and services)	-	-
		Reducing procurement carbon footprint	Undertaking a carbon footprint of Bristol City Council's procurement including outsourced services (Bri)	Carbon footprint of procurement report and guidance (ext)
		Workforce engagement	-	-

	Reducing emissions through council services	Carbon accounting for household waste prevention activities (BDP)	Carbon accounting tool for waste reduction and waste management (ext)
		Enabling large-scale carbon reduction projects for Oxford (Oxf)	Business case (int/ext)
		Energy-from-Waste project (BDP)	Project reports (int)
		Northumberland services to rural communities project (Nor)	-
		Sustainable building standards evidence (Bri)	Project report, incl. costs of sustainable building nationally (int)
Branches	3. Addressing community-wide emissions	Area-based approach: maximising potential of appropriate energy efficient home improvement (BDP)	Summary report of housing stock analy incl. methodology used (int)
		Domestic and commercial retrofit project (Har)	Project report (int); process for collatin housing stock data (ext); structure of analytical database (ext)
		Domestic energy efficiency programme (LCR)	Project report (int)
	Reducing domestic emissions	Greater Manchester housing retrofit programme (MCR)	Report on integrating behaviour change into housing retrofit (int/ext); domestic retrofit report (int/ext)
		Northumberland insulating hard-to-treat properties (Nor)	-
		Sustainable building standards evidence (Bri)	Project report, incl. costs of sustainable building nationally (int)
	Tackling community-wide travel-related emissions	Electric vehicle charging demand study (BDP)	
		Identifying the market for behaviour change interventions to encourage a switch to low carbon travel (BDP)	A report on initial stages of the work (in
		Reducing car use and carbon associated with the school journey (BDP)	A report on the findings of the interview with mothers (int)

Supporting public sector actions (schools, hospital, etc)	Inter-borough solar renewable energy opportunity analysis, framework contract and buying groups (Har)	Three project reports (int); possibly a t (ext)
	Progressing area-based solar schemes (Bri)	Guidance documents (ext)
Supporting a low carbon economy	Bristol Smart City (Bri)	Project report; Smart City Bristol Benchmark (int)
	Commercial property retrofit fund (LCR)	Project report (int)
	Developing a sustainable food supply chain (BDP)	A report on phase one of the project (ir
	Energy plan and energy action and investment framework (MCR)	Open source consultation platform (ext) energy plan (int); template and guidan (ext)
	Green enterprise growth study (Har)	Project report (int)
	Northumberland land management for carbon (Nor)	Guidance and toolkit for land carbon (e
	Local renewable energy investment strategy and prospectuses (LCR)	Project report (int)
	Low carbon economic analysis (LCR)	Project reports (int)
	Low carbon investment appraisal (MCR)	Investment appraisal model (ext)
	Supporting community action	Community sustainable energy network (BDP)
Community energy support programme (Bri)		Project report (int)
Community pathways to action on climate change (Bri)		Website (ext)
Northumberland: zero carbon Lindisfarne; facilitating community leadership and exchange; carbon reduction pilot programme (Nor)		-
A partnership approach to carbon reduction across the city of		Quicksilver carbon calculator; energy measuring support; The Hub: Low Cart

Low carbon energy generation	Oxford (Oxf)	Living website (all ext)
	Progressing area-based solar schemes (Bri)	Guidance (ext)
	Community energy support programme (Bri)	Project report (int)
	Developing a standard methodology for an area based energy, climate and peak oil resilience strategy and plan (Bri)	Project report (int)
	Developing low carbon generation capacity and awareness through energy mapping (Not)	Case studies, project methodology and data lists (ext)
	Enabling large-scale carbon reduction projects for Oxford (Oxf)	Business case (int/ext)
	Enabling low carbon development: establishing a Plymouth ESCo (Ply)	Feasibility study and energy study (int)
	Energy-from-Waste project (BDP)	Project reports (int)
	Energy Masterplanning Toolkit (Har)	Energy masterplanning guidance and t (ext)
	Energy plan and energy action and investment framework (MCR)	Open source consultation platform (ext); energy plan (int); template and guidance (ext)
	Inter-borough solar renewable energy opportunity analysis, framework contract and buying groups (Har)	Three project reports (int); possibly a t (ext)
	Light supply licence project (Har)	Draft supplier services agreement; discussion paper (ext)
	Local renewable energy investment strategy and prospectuses (LCR)	Project report (int)
Low carbon CHP and district heating study (BDP)	Specification for the feasibility study tender; reports on phases 1 and 2 of t feasibility study (int)	

		Northumberland: carbon reduction pilot programme; Hexham Abbey renewable energy and low carbon technology project; renewable energy opportunities in Upper Coquetdale (Nor)	-
		Progressing area-based solar schemes (Bri)	Guidance (ext)
		Renewable energy strategy review (BDP)	Consultation materials from the strateg review, including details of a renewable energy resources assessment (int)
4. Contributing to national carbon reduction initiatives	Supporting national initiatives at the local level e.g. Green Deal, smart meter roll out, renewable energy deployment	Many of the above projects will contribute to national objectives such as Green Deal (particularly domestic emissions projects) and renewable energy deployment (particularly low carbon energy generation projects)	-