



PRCC.20 12/13
Prosperous Communities Committee
6 November 2012

Subject: West Lindsey District Council's Green Strategy

Report by:	Rachel North Director of Communities and Localism Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan Chair of Green Member Policy Development Panel
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Purpose / Summary:	West Lindsey District Council has committed in its Corporate Plan to create a Green District where people want to work, live and visit. Members have worked to develop a Strategy for this vision and this report details this work and the key immediate actions for the Council to take to achieve its aspiration.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. That Members adopt the Green Strategy**
- 2. That Members agree the Action Plan for the next 6 months**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

None identified as a result of this report.

Financial:

Some of the Green Strategy actions are likely to reduce the Council's organisational costs and would thus contribute positively to the Council's overall budgetary position. Some projects may require initial investment to unlock these savings but individual projects will be brought to the relevant committees for individual decisions at the appropriate time.

Staffing:

Actions will need to be prioritised and built into existing team work plans and managed across the authority. There are no new staffing resources dedicated to this strategy

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

An impact assessment would need to be carried out if at a later date revised policies were produced as part of the action plan.

Risk Assessment:

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

Delivery of actions on renewable energy will have as a key aim the reduction CO2 emissions.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Report to Council.05 / 03 / 12 11/12 Paper D Renewable Energy Statement. Accessed through WLDC website "Meetings, agendas, minutes and reports"

[Paper D Renewable Energy Statement](#)

[Draft report on climate change and renewable energy - Stephen Cirell Consultancy Ltd](#)

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes

No

Key Decision:

Yes

No

1 Corporate Plan

- 1.1 West Lindsey District Council's Corporate Plan 2012 – 2016 sets out an ambitious and transformative vision for the District. Theme 2 of the Corporate Plan states that the Council wants to create;

A Green district where people want to work, live and visit

- 1.2 This aspiration involves the Council changing the way it operates as a local authority in relation to our carbon footprint, our energy usage and maximising the potential of increasing income and saving cost by doing things differently. Allied to this and potentially more importantly it requires the Council to act in its community leadership role to create the right environment for the communities and businesses of West Lindsey to do likewise increasing the potential for 'green' jobs and supporting the most vulnerable struggling with rising fuel costs.

These ambitions are long term by their very nature and recognise the national and international environment which is impacting on the Council's role and operation. The world's resources are finite and everyone at an organisational or domestic level is facing the impact of higher costs for energy and food. The most vulnerable in our communities including the elderly are having to make difficult choices about heating their homes and with the current tough economic times there is a requirement incumbent on local authorities to support their local areas in facing up to these challenges.

- 1.3 The strategy sets out our aspirations for a greener, sustainable and thriving, low carbon West Lindsey for the next 15 years and beyond.

It supports the Council's commitment over the next 15 years to protecting the environment, reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.

Developed in partnership it identifies what is important about the environment and what we all need to do to look after it, while recognising the fact we are in difficult financial times.

Key aims of the strategy include:

- minimising the amount of waste created and getting more waste re-used and recycled;
- reducing carbon emissions and the use of fossil fuels;
- improving habitats to reverse and prevent the loss of plant and animal species;
- creating a healthy and attractive environment to live, work and visit;
- promoting the use of open and green spaces for healthy and active lifestyles;
- promoting the economic value of the environment and its opportunities for growth in jobs and prosperity

2 **Green Strategy**

- 2.1 A Members group, the Green Policy Development Panel has been created from the original Task and Finish Renewable Energy Group to support the development of the Strategy objectives.

The following members are part of this Panel;

Cllr Gillian Bardsley, Cllr Owen Bierley, Cllr Paul Howitt-Cowan, Cllr Roger Patterson, Cllr Lewis Strange, Cllr Jeff Summers.

The Panel has been thus working for some time to develop the Strategy for the Council's commitment to a Green District and this is attached at Appendix 1.

This builds on the work done earlier in the year to agree a Renewable Energy Statement and Action Plan. This Action Plan will be incorporated into the overall Green Strategy Action Plan.

It states the clear ambition of the Council and sets out the thematic areas where projects will need to be defined and progressed in order to meet the challenges of this ambition

3 **Context**

- 3.1 West Lindsey District Council is better placed than many local authorities to make the most of the opportunities of environmental challenge with our modern Guildhall building, a carbon management plan that is already delivering, a recycling rate which is 16th highest in the county, and committed political and managerial leadership.
- 3.2 Overall the average carbon emissions per capita in West Lindsey are lower than the UK average, however in relation to the production of renewable energy West Lindsey is one of the lowest producing districts in the county.
- 3.3 The District is fortunate having a number of highly successful 'green' businesses who are leading the way in their fields, Eco Plastics for example at Hemswell Cliff has the European recycling contract for Coca Cola and has expanded significantly over recent years .
- 3.4 In addition with the highest recycling rate in Lincolnshire and the 16th highest nationally West Lindsey citizens have shown their commitment to reducing waste and protecting the environment. A recent Citizens Panel highlighted a strong willingness for individuals to take personal action to support 'green' outcomes and as part of the Council's localism project which is already in delivery, we are supporting local community action by connecting people and sharing information and providing seed corn funding through our various Community Funds.

4 **Green Strategy**

There are three important stands to the Strategy

4.1 **Green Council**

Work to further exploit the potential to reduce the Council's energy costs both in relation to utilising renewable energy solutions on our buildings where possible and to changing the way we work to reduce costs and become more efficient. The carbon management plan is an essential part of this commitment .

4.2 **Green Communities**

Championing local people to explore different local solutions to the challenges of climate change and rising energy costs. Connecting communities with good ideas together to share opportunities and creating an environment of support. Addressing the increasing challenges of fuel poverty among our elderly and vulnerable citizens. Key in this theme is also the approach to waste with a clear commitment to reducing waste by encouraging re-use and recycling opportunities.

4.3 **Green Business**

To create a positive environment to encourage both new business in the 'green' market place to create new jobs and opportunities for our communities and supporting existing businesses to face the challenges of rising energy costs and the need to address climate change .

5 The Vision

West Lindsey's Green Strategy Programme is aimed at providing coordinated leadership of West Lindsey's drive to reduce its carbon footprint, its role in facilitating community initiatives and providing the foundations for a thriving low carbon economy. To this end, a vision, a clear strategy, a delivery programme and set of outcomes have been developed to ensure that the Council has a firm direction of travel moving forward.

West Lindsey strives to be the greenest district with a thriving green economy that results in improved wellbeing for residents and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and threats to biodiversity. West Lindsey's operations are nationally recognised as being low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.

Within West Lindsey's green economy, growth in income and employment should be driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. These investments will be catalysed and supported by targeted expenditure from the Council, supportive policies and information support on regulations and funding.

We recognise the importance of our natural environment, and celebrate and promote it to residents, businesses and visitors. Development should maintain, enhance and, where necessary, rebuild our environment as a critical economic asset and as a source of public benefits, especially for our agricultural sector whose livelihoods and security depend on nature.

Our green vision means that our economic and development goals are balanced with a focus on social equity and maintaining environmental systems for present and future generations.

6 Moving to Action

- 6.1 The vision laid out in the Strategy is ambitious and long term and it is important that clear and achievable actions are identified in order to marshal the Council's resources to make positive progress, accepting that everything will not be achieved overnight. As such the Action Plan focuses on the key activities over the next 6 months.

Whilst the council is already making good progress in some areas, the vision is not something that will can be achieved by the council working alone. It will require local partners and communities to work together with public agencies, business, the voluntary and community sector and others.

The Strategy sets out below what the aspiration is and what West Lindsey will look like in 15 years time if we succeed in delivering the strategy.

- There is a better quality environment which has made people healthier;

- People are more aware of how important the environment is to our prosperity and where there are more 'low carbon' and environmental jobs;
- We are more self-sufficient and use energy and resources better;
- We are an important agricultural area that feeds the nation in the most carbon efficient environmentally friendly way possible;
- The landscape and built and historic environment retains its unique character and has been protected and enhanced so that it and benefits all – visitors, businesses and residents;
- Areas of high nature conservation quality have been conserved and the loss of plant and animal species has been reversed;
- We are firmly on track to becoming a 'low carbon' county and are more adaptive to climate change;
- People have become 'greener' in the way they live their lives;
- Local businesses are seen to have the most environmentally friendly practices and are world leaders in green technologies;
- The environment lies at the heart of other strategies and plans for the district and the county and where we have worked together better to implement them.

7 Key actions

- 7.1 The action plan attached attempts to define the key first steps over the next 6 months to support the delivery of the Strategy.
- 7.2 In summary these are, under a Green Council a review will be carried out as part of the authority's asset utilisation strategy to assess the viability for renewable energy solutions to be used within council buildings and land. The opportunity for initiatives which promote renewable energy will be comprehensively investigated and proposals brought back for consideration by Members.
- 7.3 A new Waste Strategy will be developed to ensure the Council's resources within this service are maximised to promote local recycling and positive end use of the waste collected within our district. The Strategy will include how the Council can promote local community solutions to 'surplus' materials focusing on re-use and waste minimisation.
- 7.4 Under a Green Community the Council will launch a communications campaign to highlight the issues and opportunities for local people. The Strategy will be produced as a leaflet and used to raise the profile of the Council's ambition. The Localism Team and local ward councillors will promote the ideas within communities and seek out champions in local areas to initiate local community action to promote a 'green' district.
- 7.5 Over and above our existing work to promote access to subsidised home insulation the Council will look to work on a collective switching campaign to support local people with the rising costs for energy.
- 7.6 Under the banner of Green business the Council will create a virtual forum for local business to share ideas and good practice around 'green issues' and for any barriers within the local authority to supporting employers will be addressed.

7.7 To ensure action is driven the Green Programme board will meet monthly and a set of effective targets developed to enable monitoring of the Strategy. Members on the Policy Development Panel will continue to support the development of the Green programme and reports on specific projects will be brought back to Prosperous Committee for consideration by Members.

Appendix 1

Green Strategy document

Appendix 2

Green Strategy Action Plan

Green Strategy



West Lindsey District Council's Green Strategy

West Lindsey's green strategy defines the vision, aims and high level ambition for the Council itself as well the wider aspirations for the district that we think is achievable working in partnership. Sitting underneath this strategy are a number of projects that deliver outputs that will be specifically geared towards the agreed outcomes of the strategy. Some of these outcomes are based on National and European targets, but it is envisaged that by working together. West Lindsey can exceed these targets and become a leading Green Council. This will deliver community benefit by safeguarding the natural environment and bringing economic growth and jobs.

The strategy sets out our aspirations for a greener, sustainable and thriving, low carbon West Lindsey for the next 15 years and beyond.

Introduction

The environmental challenges that we face today are well known. Climate change is upon us and as traditional resources become harder to obtain and the environmental impact of their extraction and unconstrained use more difficult to justify, it is now clear that change is coming in the way we go about our lives. It will also affect the way organisations such as West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) will operate.

However, with change comes opportunity, and we are better placed than most to make the most of these opportunities with our modern Guildhall building, a carbon management plan that is already delivering, and because we are a stable, well run authority with committed political and managerial leadership

Overall, the average carbon emissions per capita are lower than the UK average, but in terms of renewable energy WLDC is currently one of the lowest producing districts in Lincolnshire. We have massive potential however, and know we can do more. We are also fortunate that we have leadership, corporate commitment people living in district who take environment seriously as can be seen from the results of citizen's panel surveys a recycling rate that is amongst the best in the country.

We are committed to the localism agenda we have already seen that that people will volunteer their time willingly, and work hard for environmental causes they believe in. Taken together West Lindsey's natural and human resources offer a potent combination for success.

The elements that have provided West Lindsey with its potential for low carbon energy production has also define our unique natural environment that so many people enjoy and living with. This wide open landscapes and rich farmlands of West Lindsey not only creates jobs through agriculture etc, but defines a way of life helping the people of West Lindsey to live healthy lives, consuming local produce in a place that particularly engenders a sense of belonging.

For West Lindsey to make the most of these natural and human factors we need to work in partnership. Our Green Council programme acknowledges this through its emphasis on Green Enterprising Communities.

Foreword

West Lindsey District Council has a leadership role not only in improving its own performance in carbon reduction and provision of natural and green spaces, but also in pushing forward and inspiring communities to reach their full potential.

As part of this leadership role, it is important that we also consider what the possibilities of a low carbon society, with good provision of and access to its natural and historic environment will offer both to our communities and the economy, focussing on issues such as reducing fuel poverty and improving physical and mental health through practical measures such as insulation and energy saving but also by creating a healthy living environment.

It is equally important that we make sure that the skills and companies required to help make houses more energy efficient or that build or install other renewable energy technologies are all locally sourced and that new developments in West Lindsey incorporate proper provision for green spaces. The possibilities are endless, and West Lindsey is already seen as a leader by many in areas such as green agriculture and horticulture technologies that could place us not only at the heart of the regional picture but also nationally and internationally with huge economic benefits.

Taken together the outcomes of the Green Strategy strands are clear – higher levels of renewable energy production, reduced carbon emissions, improved quality of life, a protected natural environment, community and economic benefit.

Without working in partnership it will be impossible to deliver on these outcomes. This strategy aims to focus the work of the Green Council programme on bringing together the combined knowledge, enthusiasm and expertise of a wide range of partners who collectively can work with the council to deliver on our aspirations.

It is a challenging yet exciting time to be living in West Lindsey, and I am optimistic about the contribution and leadership that we can offer in tackling the global challenges we face.

Cllr Burt Keimach
Leader of the Council

Purpose of Green Strategy

West Lindsey's Green Strategy Programme is aimed at providing coordinated leadership of West Lindsey's drive to reduce its carbon footprint, its role in facilitating community initiatives and providing the foundations for a thriving low carbon economy. To this end, a vision, a clear strategy, a delivery programme and set of outcomes have been developed to ensure that the council has a firm direction of travel moving forward.

The Vision

West Lindsey strives to be the greenest district with a thriving green economy that results in improved wellbeing for residents and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and threats to biodiversity. West Lindsey's operations are nationally recognised as being low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.

Within West Lindsey's green economy, growth in income and employment should be driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. These investments will be catalysed and supported by targeted expenditure from the council, supportive policies and information support on regulations and funding.

We recognise the importance of our natural environment, and celebrate and promote it to residents, businesses and visitors. Development should maintain, enhance and, where necessary, rebuild our environment as a critical economic asset and as a source of public benefits, especially for our agricultural sector whose livelihoods and security depend on nature.

Our green vision means that our economic and development goals are balanced with a focus on social equity and maintaining environmental systems for present and future generations.

Whilst we are already making good progress in some areas, the vision is not something that will be fulfilled overnight. It will require partners to work together and show huge commitment and foresight to achieve it, but the stakes are too high for us to contemplate failure.

We set out below what West Lindsey will look like in 15 years time if we succeed in delivering the strategy.

In 15 years time West Lindsey will be a place where:

- there is a better quality environment which has made people healthier
- people are more aware of how important the environment is to our prosperity and where there are more 'low carbon' and environmental jobs
- we are more self-sufficient and use energy and resources better
- we are an important agricultural area that feeds the nation in the most carbon efficient environmentally friendly way possible
- the landscape and built and historic environment retains its unique character and has been protected and enhanced so that it and benefits all – visitors, businesses and residents

- areas of high nature conservation quality have been conserved and the loss of plant and animal species has been reversed
- we are firmly on track to becoming a 'low carbon' county and are more adaptive to climate change
- people have become 'greener' in the way they live their lives
- local businesses are seen to have the most environmentally friendly practices and are world leaders in green technologies
- the environment lies at the heart of other strategies and plans for the district and the county and where we have worked together better to implement them

The strategy

The strategy has been developed through linking in with the Central Lincolnshire's, Joint Planning Unit's renewables and low carbon energy study, the work of West Lindsey's renewable energy group and the general thrust of a localist and entrepreneurial council. This is to ensure that wider corporate leadership aspirations are captured in West Lindsey's Green Strategy programme.

To realise the vision we have identified a number of priority areas where we think we all need to do things differently in the future. They are areas where we have identified key short/medium term actions, showing how we will start to make the strategy happen and who will be responsible for that. The areas are as follows:

Carbon Management/Climate Change

Aim: Reducing the council's carbon emissions to both meet and exceed its carbon reduction commitment in line with WLDC's carbon management plan. Become more adaptive to climate change and help individuals and communities to do the same.

Green Economy

Aim: Promote the economic value of the environment and opportunities for growth in jobs and prosperity that it presents. Providing the infrastructure, investment, and requisite skills to create the conditions for a measurable transformation towards a low carbon economy.

Housing/Communities

Aim: Supporting communities to become more resilient, promote demand reduction and increase renewable energy production. Develop community benefit models that tackle fuel poverty and provide local gain through feed in tariff contributions.

Renewable energy

Aim: Through council, other public sector, private sector and community organisations activity, promote the use of renewable energy. Maximise the benefits from subsidies to local people.

Waste

Aim: Minimise the amount of waste created in West Lindsey and reuse and recycle more household and business waste. Waste seen as a resource, that benefits the local economy to enable the council and businesses to call upon the minimum amount of virgin resources.

Biodiversity

Aim: Protect and enhance the diverse natural habitats of the district and the wildlife they support, making them more resilient to climate change, reversing biodiversity loss, and help create conditions for sustainable agriculture. Promote the use of open spaces as part of healthier and more active lifestyles.

Built environment

Aim: Develop high quality environments in our towns and villages and protect and enhance the distinctive character of our landscapes. Show respect and care for the built heritage of West Lindsey.

Living environment

Aim: Promote the use of open spaces as part of healthier and more active lifestyles. Improve the quality of the environment and our health by reducing air and noise pollution.

Localism and community action

Aim: Reduce the impact of travel on the environment by supporting our staff to work in an agile and efficient manner located out in the communities of the district. Make services available locally. Help improve sustainable travel choices to help resident's access services and facilities within and between communities in the district and county. Support citizen action on environmental issues that they care about and help people to help themselves.

Leadership and communication

Aim: The council will lead by example, providing leadership in reaching Lincolnshire/ national targets and the transformation to a low carbon economy. Increase our understanding, appreciation and stewardship of the environment of West Lindsey and help residents do the same.

How we'll deliver the Green District Strategy

The aim is to match our strategic intent through three distinct strands of activity, to enable what we have called "Green enterprising communities". They can be loosely termed as **Green Council, Green Communities and Green Economy**. Each strand has a different focus, with projects sitting underneath it. How the council is involved will vary according to the strand.

Green strand	Key focus	Example
Green Council	Delivery	Carbon management plan
Green Communities	Facilitation	Green deal/localism initiatives
Green Economy	Leadership	Green development zones

Outcomes

All projects that are included in West Lindsey's Green District programme will need to evidence how they contribute towards the corporate plan outcomes to ensure that in its entirety the programme can evidence delivery towards agreed targets:

Analysis of the evidence

The use of evidence and baseline data is crucial if the Green District programme is to set challenging but achievable targets. There may still areas that require further analysis, and some areas (such as the carbon management plan) where good data is held.

Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement

The consultation on this strategy has been largely based on liaison with the relevant council department heads and members of the Green Policy Development Group. There is a need to work with community groups and partners, and through working with the economic development service and the local enterprise partnership for Lincolnshire to ensure that the strategy adds value and supports corporate objectives.

However, it must be stressed that the WLDC corporate plan priorities that this strategy links into were derived from and based on a large amount of consultation; in consequence the overarching aims of this strategy link into a robust and evidence based set of corporate priorities.

How we will deliver the Strategy

The green project board will monitor the delivery of the strategy alongside the Member Policy Development Panel with regular reports back to both the Policy and Resources and Prosperous Communities Committees on specific initiatives.

Green Strategy targets and actions will be set out in a range of work streams and the reporting arrangements proposed will ensure that the environmental elements of those work streams are monitored effectively. It is proposed that overall performance will be reported to the public annually as we seek to demonstrate our progress and lead by example.

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Appendix 2

GREEN STRATEGY Moving to Action

High Level Action Plan

Objectives	Corporate Aims*	Actions	Who	Date	Progress
<p>West Lindsey District Council to be an exemplar 'Green' authority.</p>		<p>Deliver West Lindsey's Carbon Management Plan; monitor and review. Identify and develop new carbon saving projects.</p> <p>Business cases developed for all council assets after prioritisation</p> <p>Decisions taken on potential investment</p> <p>(Link to Commercial Board)</p>	<p>Karen Lond</p> <p>Grant Lockett</p> <p>Members</p>	<p>2014</p> <p>April 2013</p>	<p>Achieved 30% reduction in CO2 since 2008/09.</p> <p>List of WLDC assets and the current valuation schedule produced and reviewed for renewables potential in Aug 2012.</p> <p>Findings to be examined in the light of revised government subsidies and the new commercial strategy at WLDC.</p>

Appendix 2

Objectives	Corporate Aims*	Actions	Who	Date	Progress
<p>A resource service that maximises the opportunities for waste minimisation and recycling</p>		<p>Develop clear priorities for Waste Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service specification - Partnership opportunities - Community initiatives <p>Produce Waste Strategy</p>	<p>Adrian Selby</p>	<p>April 2013</p>	<p>Project underway in this area. Strategy is being built on the principle that waste is a resource that benefits the local economy and enables the council and businesses to call upon the minimum amount of virgin resources.</p> <p>Plans to minimise the amount of household waste created in West Lindsey and reuse and recycle more waste are already delivering – eg 56% recycling</p> <p>Plans are being revised and expanded to include business waste.</p>

Appendix 2

Objectives	Corporate Aims*	Actions	Who	Date	Progress
Promote understanding of 'green' agenda in the wider community		Communication Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop strategy for different stakeholders ▪ Produce leaflet to detail vision ▪ Arrange 'virtual networks' with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - businesses - parish councils - citizens to understand their issues	Julie Heath Steve Leary	Dec 2012 Jan 2013	Initial discussions have taken place, and examples of best practice or case studies identified. Strategy and leaflet being produced in conjunction with the communications team and reporting back to the green PDP in Nov. Communication acknowledged as being vital to the overall green strategy
Reduce Community Energy Costs		Participate with HELP to deliver Lincolnshire Affordable Warmth Strategy Promote bulk oil buy scheme Community Lincs Explore Collective Switching campaign Explore Green Deal	Karen Lond HELP Localism Team Steve Leary Steve Leary	2016 Oct 12 Dec 12 Dec 12	HELP Insulation Scheme delivered measures to over 10,000 households across Lincolnshire The Localism team are working with Community Lincs to promote the bulk oil buying scheme to parishes and community groups

Appendix 2

Objectives	Corporate Aims*	Actions	Who	Date	Progress
Drive Progress on Green Strategy		<p>Targets and outcomes to be developed.</p> <p>Data to be gathered to support target development.</p> <p>Success Measures scorecard to be reviewed to align with Programme</p> <p>Member Policy Development Panel meetings set regularly to maintain focus</p> <p>Green Project board established and meeting monthly to drive action Reports on progress brought back to Committees</p>	Rachel North	Nov 12	<p>Score card review underway</p> <p>Members meetings set</p> <p>Green Project Board established and dates set for meetings</p>