

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting16th July 2015

1. Title of Item/Report

Covenant of Mayors - European Carbon Reduction Project

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on Covenant of Mayors - European Carbon Reduction Project.

The report presented the rationale for formally withdrawing from the EU Covenant of Mayors initiative (CoM). It was established in 2008 as a voluntary commitment for local and regional authorities across Europe to publicly demonstrate actions to exceed the European Union objective of a region wide 20% Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) reduction by 2020. By submitting a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) and thereafter bi-ennial monitoring reports, it was publicised as an opportunity for technical support and assistance in carbon reduction, favourable access to external funding and European Investment Bank (EIB) support to unlock investment potential for actions.

Despite a number of shared concerns, all North East local authorities, encouraged by ANEC, became signatories in 2009 and the Council submitted the SEAP in February 2010, to deliver a greenhouse gas emissions reduction of 21% by 2020 on a 2005 baseline. Without significant financial support the plan was undeliverable and it was anticipated that investment would be forthcoming via ANEC and the CoM.

However in the intervening 6 years the Council had yet to receive any communication from the CoM on the original submission, the Council had never been requested to submit a monitoring report, the supporting structures no longer exist, and none of the anticipated financial support, grant funding and other financial streams had materialised.

In discussion with neighbouring authorities, there was a shared willingness to withdraw from the initiative. Irrespective of the CoM, the Council had performed extremely well in the last 5 years. Against the original 2005 benchmark, the Council had achieved a 32.5% reduction in CO₂ against the 2005 baseline, thereby exceeding our original target.

Not being a formal signatory of the Covenant of Mayors programme would reduce the bureaucratic burden and reduce the risk of significant administration should they request updated reports, while the Council had exceeded the original targets and in 2015/16 would see the development of the new long term, comprehensive Climate Change Strategy to see continuous improvement in the Council carbon reduction performance.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The positive performance in recent years with a 32.5% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the Borough between 2005 and 2013, and the recent support for the LGA's Climate Local Initiative be noted.
2. The challenges faced by local authorities since the voluntary Covenant of Mayors was established be noted.
3. The formal withdrawal from the initiative be supported.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To enable Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to focus on the development of a long term Climate Change Strategy for the Borough while releasing the administrative burden of an initiative which has not delivered the anticipated financial benefits or technical assistance for carbon reduction.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

24th July 2015

Proper Officer
20 July 2015